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Dungeons & Dragons

—LOST RELICS OF THE—
FORGOTTEN REALMS

Dragon®

ISSUE 333 · JULY 2005

RAGE! HATRED! DECEIT!
The Tortured Mind of Fraz-Urb'luu

IT'S GOOD TO BE
THE KING
KEITH BAKER
ON NOBLE PCs

ECOLOGY OF THE
BEHIR

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ISSUE 333 JULY 2005

Dragon

VOL. XXX NUMBER 2

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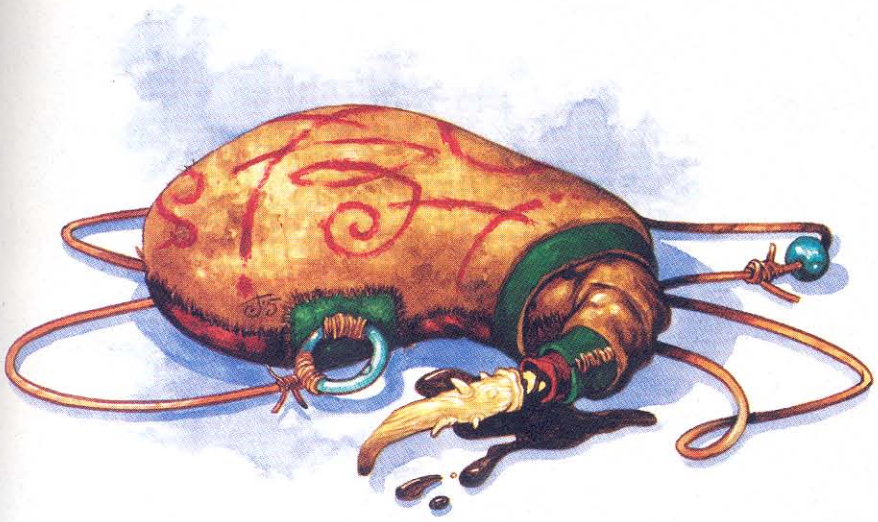

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THE REMEMBERED REALMS

Yeah, yeah, yeah, Mona. We know you like GREYHAWK, and I guess that new EBERRON setting is pretty cool, but whatever happened to the FORGOTTEN REALMS?

That's been the gist of a lot of letters we've received since I took the helm of this venerable magazine. Almost everyone appreciates a good "generic" article, but fans of the official campaign settings are always clamoring for more coverage of their favorite world.

Over the course of its history, *DRAGON* has had an interesting relationship with the official D&D settings. Some editors have shied away from them, reasoning that core D&D articles are more likely to speak to the widest possible group of readers. Others have embraced the campaign settings, publishing previews and interviews with their creators to present never-before-revealed anecdotes and development notes.

Campaign settings have come and gone as the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game has morphed from edition to edition, but the letters keep coming. *DRAGON* readers have long memories, and their appetite for exciting new material on strange worlds is impossible to sate.

Obscure, no-longer-supported campaign settings finally have a home with our now-annual Campaign Classics theme. But as a fully supported campaign setting, the FORGOTTEN REALMS is somewhat different. The setting currently receives a fantastic level of support from Wizards of the Coast, with a full novel line and a series of impressive hardcover sourcebooks written by true fans of the setting. In many ways, there's never been a better time to be a fan of the FORGOTTEN REALMS.

Except if you're looking for good Realms content in *DRAGON*, that is. There just hasn't been much of it around these parts lately, and a lot of readers have written in saying they think that's a shame.

And you know what? I agree with them. The Realms first met the world in the pages of this magazine, as the background setting for countless articles by Ed Greenwood. When TSR needed a new full-service campaign setting in the late 1980s, Ed's world was a natural choice because so many D&D readers were already familiar with it thanks to his articles in *DRAGON*. That Ed also had truckloads of unpublished material for the world certainly didn't hurt, either.

So the Realms are coming back to *DRAGON*, in a big way. It all starts with "The Relics of Faerûn," on page 48 of this issue. Next issue, Ed Greenwood himself drops by with an expansive treatment of Crimmor, a bustling city in the merchant kingdom of Amn. Crimmor kicks off a new series by Ed we're currently calling "Cities of the Realms." The manuscripts are already pouring in, and I think everyone will find a lot to like in these articles, whether or not you're an avid fan of the FORGOTTEN REALMS.

Issue #335 celebrates Waterdeep, the central city of the FORGOTTEN REALMS, with an overview of the city's role in Realms history by Eric L. Boyd and two articles by fan favorite Realms novelist Elaine Cunningham (including a never-before-published short story featuring the popular Elaith Craulnober).

Fans of the City of Splendors will want to check out *DUNGEON*, our sister magazine, which kicks off the new Age of Worms Adventure Path this month (with Realms conversions by Eric L. Boyd) and will publish a three-adventure "Vampires of Waterdeep" Campaign Arc (also by Boyd) starting in next month's issue.

What comes next in *DRAGON*? Doppelganger cults of the City of Splendors, a look at Impiltur, and much, much more. I've got my sights set beyond the borders of the well established setting, too, so we'll see if we can't blaze some new ground of our own. I'm tremendously excited about what's in store, and I can assure all of our FORGOTTEN REALMS readers out there that great things are on the horizon.

Yeah, yeah, yeah, Mona. We know you like the FORGOTTEN REALMS, but what about EBERRON and GREYHAWK?

Trust me, my friends. We're just getting started.

ERIK

Erik Mona
Editor-in-Chief

LETTERS

Tell us what you think of this issue. Send an email to **scalemail@paizo.com**. Please include your name, city, and state.

A Message from The Koga

The Koga loves every issue of *Dragon* magazine. Each one gives The Koga new insight and interesting concepts he has never been exposed to before. Your pole arm section ["The Point of Pole Arms," #331] gave The Koga a great idea for a "dragoon" character, the treasuring strategies showed The Koga that governments and bandits should play a bigger role in keeping the party from being rich snobs, and as always The Koga's favorite section, Class Acts, was a blast. The Koga does have a question about that. Could you base an issue around lawful characters? Perhaps make like an alternate for many of the chaos classes, barbarians into Vikings, rogues into vigilantes, bards into politicians, and druids into green-men.

But besides the hoping of seeing that there's really nothing you haven't done that HASN'T pleased The Koga. Keep up the good work.

The Koga: The Ninja Trick
Via Email

We currently have no plans to base an issue around lawful characters, but we promise to let The Koga know the minute we change our minds. All hail The Koga.

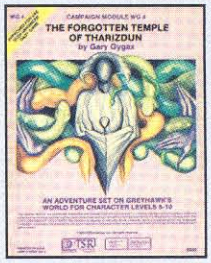
Further Information

Well, another good issue [#329]. However, the Beowulf article was a bit dodgy because, well, it's been done before and to death. The Class Act, "Swarm Familiars" sounds like Granny Weatherwax riding the mind of a bee swarm. An option for a villain, perhaps, but not really for PCs. I guess there are plenty who disagree, though.

If you'd like a nice holiday in France, try Tarrascon (mentioned in the article "The Petit Tarrasque and Other Monsters"), just 23 kilometers south of Avignon. Visit St. Martha's Collegiate Church and its crypt that dates from the 3rd century AD. The castle was begun by Louis II of Anjou in 1401 and completed by his second son, René I of Naples, in 1449. But be there on the last Sunday in June when they have a celebration of the Tarrasque. The town's coat-of-arms even features the monster! According to the article at Wikipedia (**wikipedia.com**), the monster was a "...sort of dragon with six short legs like a bear's, an ox-like body covered with a turtle shell, and a scaly tail that ended in a scorpion's sting. It had a lion's head, horse's ears, and the face of a bitter old man." Details might differ, but it was certainly hideous. (Lose d10/d100 SAN to see a Tarrasque?)

The "Mesopotamian Mythos" article was excellent. A nice update of the first edition *Deities & Demigods*. There is one piece of music that I know of (although there must be others) that is based on the story of Gilgamesh. *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, by Bohuslav Martinu (1890–1959) is a stunning oratorio. I have two recordings in my library. The first is part of Naxos's Marco Polo series with the Slovak Philharmonic Choir and Orchestra. The other was a freebie with *BBC Music Magazine* (Vol. IV, No. 11). That recording features the BBC Symphony Orchestra and Chorus. It has the narration in English (Jack Shepherd). If you're very, very lucky, you may be able to get a copy of the back issue. I think it's

BLAST FROM THE PAST
WG4: THE FORGOTTEN TEMPLE OF THARIZDUN


CAMPAIGN MODULE WG 4
THE FORGOTTEN TEMPLE OF THARIZDUN
by Gary Gygax
AN ADVENTURE SET ON GREYHAWK'S WORLD FOR CHARACTER LEVELS 9-12
TSR

In 1982 TSR released *The Forgotten Temple of Tharizdun*, 23rd on *Dungeon*'s list of greatest adventures (see *Dungeon* #116) and a follow-up to the popular *S4: The Lost Caverns of Tsojcanth* (see page 59).

Tharizdun, a forgotten deity with mysterious ties to the number 333, fell to his enemies and disappeared from the multiverse. For an entire age the temple lay forgotten.

When the PCs discovered it, norkers, gnolls, ogres, and giants had taken up residence within. Fighting their way down to the main floor, the characters confronted the chapel—a collection of rooms, areas, and hallways manifesting evil and insanity brought forth by the merest touch of the walls. Below the temple spread the dungeon, wherein lay madness.

The party first tasted Tharizdun's lost power at the base of the descending stairs. A purple column housing four idols of different colors rose in the center of the first chamber. Interacting with the speaking column in any way unleashed a complicated and powerful programmed illusion.

Deep below the temple, in an area of unbelievable cold and darkness known only as the Black Cyst, intrepid adventurers at last encountered the needle-stone block the ancients regarded as the entrapped form of Tharizdun. Beyond the imprisoned god's earthly form, in a hidden room found only by the call of the Iron Horn of Tharizdun, a chest (with fifty poison-needle traps on it!) contained the legendary 333 gems of Tharizdun.

unlikely to pop up on eBay, but you never know! Good luck.

In any case, it's one of my favorite pieces of music and it's only been pure chance that I haven't used either the Babylonian or Sumerian gods in my campaigns. (Go Tiamat!)

Ron Newsome
Healesville, Australia

Truly Forgotten Realms

Allow me to start out by saying, like so many others, what a fantastic job you guys are doing. I'm not a subscriber, but I do my best to buy both *Dragon* and *Dungeon* every month, even though it can be difficult in a small town with a small-town mentality. I've only been an avid player for a couple years or so, but I was certainly around for some of the recent big changes. And, I must say, I truly disliked most of them at first, but after a few issues I began to realize that I was just being a nimrod, a revelation that I think most of us experienced at one point or another.

Now, are you ready for the complaint? Heh, yeah, you know you saw it comin'. I realize that every campaign setting—Eberron, Greyhawk, Forgotten Realms—is getting its own spotlight here and there, but it feels as if it's in that order, and I can't help but wince when reading Scale Mail and I see someone say "How about some more Eberron/Greyhawk material!". I absolutely loved the Far Realm article back in issue #330 by Bruce Cordell, but, besides that, I can't name any off of the top of my head, which worries me.

Now, I completely love FR to death. I don't think I could ever even consider switching over to any other campaign setting. The abundance of books out for Forgotten Realms really helps, but I only have the money to order books four months out of the year due to a seasonal occupation. Therefore, there's hardly any new material for me, and, the books aside, the magazine articles about the different settings are much easier to pick apart for the juiciest bits, I find.

Finally, in order to shut myself up, a closing note: fantastic job, you guys. I will always remember this team and Erik Mona when the next one comes along. Just a little more involvement for my beloved Forgotten Realms would make me perfectly content. And, it's really amazing how much you guys can make people feel as if they really belong to something, and that their every word counts. And that's that.

Konrad Hellwig
Via Email

Best Ever?

I just want to compliment you guys on the best D&D magazine, supplement, and so on I have read ever. In the latest issue [#331] you mentioned arguments over the bec de corbin, lucern hammer, and so on. I remember having those arguments with my friends when we first started playing, but not just those weapons but also things like a longsword versus a broadsword or a warhammer versus a battleaxe.

It just shows you no matter how much D&D changes it will always remain the same, which is rather cool. Anyway keep on rockin' the D&D world and try to get more Forgotten Realms items in if possible.

Chris
Via Email

Check out this issue's editorial for more on upcoming Forgotten Realms articles, Chris! We're really excited about what's in store, including a new column by Ed Greenwood, an article from Elaine Cunningham on Waterdeep's bard college, and more. You'll also want to check out Dungeon #126–128 for a three-part Waterdeep Campaign Arc by Eric L. Boyd.

Page Turning Check Failed

I just finished reading issue #331, and I noticed a small picture in the center column at the bottom of page 12. The name of the starfishlike weapon is the Glaive, from the movie *Krull*.

Allan Weilbacker
Via Email

Right you are, Allan! Did the hint at the bottom of #331's page 14 help?

In Response to Whoa

In response to the letter "Whoa," in *Dragon* #331. To be honest, I don't know where to start. I am a "chick gamer." I am good at my game and I have been playing since I was knee-high to a grasshopper. What I have seen in this time is that many girls come to check out D&D and then leave in a cloud of dust when they get hit with a wall of "come here baby and let me show you my *+10 holy avenger*" (which in fact is only +2 and don't call me baby) or the other side of the ugly male D&D player "if it breathes... kill it."

There would be truckloads of girls playing if they weren't objectified the minute they picked up a die. Cool, have a model walking around Gen Con in a chainmail bikini. Just don't expect me to go and play a game session at a convention that tells me I have to be Red Sonja and finds it hard to cope when I'm not or just plain don't want to be.

I work in the industry, and have done for years. I have seen the die-hard girls hang in there by the skin of their teeth to push through the barriers to earn the respect of their fellow players. But guys, it shouldn't be that hard... you need to be a bit more open to things like "story" and "characters" and god forbid... "plot" if you want girls to play. But isn't this something that we all should be striving for in our games? Endless fights with no real purpose is pointless.

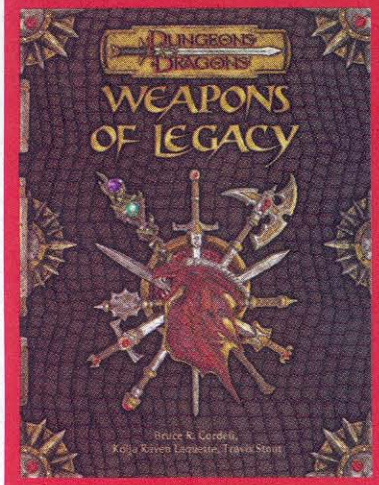
Joanne Ellem
Via Email

Women make up 5% of the readership of this magazine, and a slightly larger percentage of all D&D gamers. I'm personally fascinated by that statistic (women, in general, seem just as interested in fantasy fiction as most guys I know). I'd love to hear from more female readers about why the scales are so out of balance in favor of the boys, and what can be done to bring more ladies into the fold. Because, as you well know, I'm all about the ladies.—Erik Mona

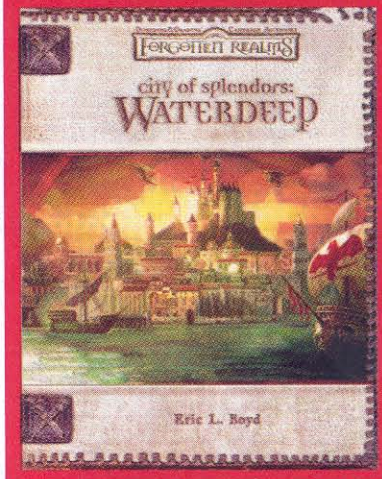
reported by Shelly Baur, Mike Fehlauer, Mike L. Fiegel, James Lowder, Mike McArtor, and James Sutter

PREVIEWS, NOTES, AND NEWS FOR GAMERS

NEW RELEASES



Transform your character's arsenal with *Weapons of Legacy*. With more than forty new weapons, each with a detailed history, powers, rituals, and suggestions for mini adventures, never pick up just a boring +1 *longsword* again. From designers Bruce R. Cordell, Kolja Raven Liquette, and Travis Stout, *Weapons of Legacy* includes rules for how weapons gain power, combine with feats, and enhance your character's skill and powers to enhance your game as never before. –*S.B.*



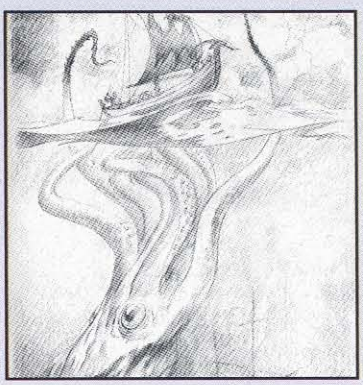
City of Splendors: Waterdeep provides the ultimate travel guide to one of the most exciting and popular cities in the FORGOTTEN REALMS. Find out who's who, what's new, and where to find anything you could possibly want in the major cosmopolitan center of Faerûn. Including an eight-section full-color map of the city, designer Eric L. Boyd also provides numerous new prestige classes, feats, monsters, magic items, and more, all unique to the City of Splendors. –*S.B.*

The newest set of *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS Miniatures, Angelfire*, delivers a whole new host of heroes and villains for your D&D game. New celestially themed heroes, like the Mounted Paladin, Trumpet Archon, and Sword Archon face off against new fiends like the Barbed Devil and Chain Devil. Eight new Large uncommons also include the Troll Slasher and the Werebear.

Angelfire is so powerful that not all the figures work in 100-point play, but they balance nicely in 200-point games. Marking a shift in design philosophy, the designers added a number of feats and abilities to the original D&D stats to improve skirmish play. –*S.B.*

NEXT MONTH IN DRAGON

DRAGON August #334



Cities of the Realms: Crimmor

by Ed Greenwood

First in a new series by the master of the FORGOTTEN REALMS, Ed Greenwood presents the city of Crimmor, central hub for trade in the merchant kingdom of Amn. Explore the city's every facet, from a sampling of its fine cuisine to a guide to its unique merchant symbols. Do your adventurers dare oppose the Dragonlady, or might they find themselves working alongside the mysterious Shadow Thieves?

The Fires of Alchemy

by Paul Leach

As one of the most common alchemical items, alchemist's fire has myriad uses. Historically, more than one type of alchemist's (or Greek) fire existed. This article presents new types and delivery methods for this classic volatile substance.

Monsters of Arabia

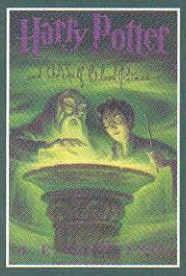
by Wolfgang Baur

Six new monsters pulled from the depths of Arabian myth and legend. Match your players against the demonic three-armed stone asag, the mischievous and cruel flying monkey, or the stoic golden clockwork eunuch.

Plus!

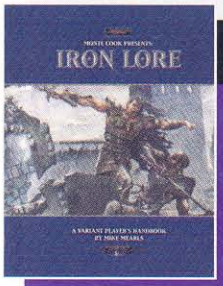
The Ecology of the Kraken, part two of Wormfood, and of course, Class Acts, Bazaar of the Bizarre, Spellcraft, First Watch, Scale Mail, Sage Advice, and comics.

HARRY POTTER AND THE HALF-BLOOD PRINCE



On July 16th, what many suspect will be J.K.Rowling's penultimate Harry Potter book releases in the US, UK, Canada, and Australia. *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* tracks Harry's sixth year at Hogwart's School of Witchcraft and Wizardry and weighs in at a hefty (albeit shorter than book five) 672 pages.

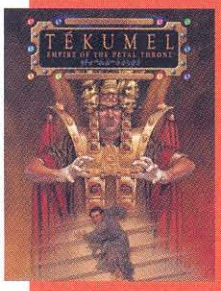
In addition to the normal hardback, Scholastic will also offer a deluxe edition of the book that includes 32 pages of long-time Harry Potter artist Mary GrandPré's art. The deluxe edition will come in a foil-stamped cardboard slipcase with a number of other high-quality inserts that will undoubtedly legitimize the $60 retail price. *–M.M.*

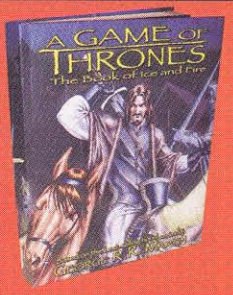


RIDDLE OF STEEL

Releasing this month, *Iron Lore* from Malhavoc Press (**montecook.com**) offers an alternative *Player's Handbook* that removes D&D's magic addiction, enabling characters more like heroes from classic fantasy literature. Among other tweaks it introduces a new token-based combat mechanic. Author Mike Mearls explains: "A defense-oriented character might take feats that allow him to gain tokens when an opponent misses him. Such a PC might be best off fighting defensively for the first round, dodging attacks to gather tokens, then following up with a riposte." Even with tokens, a new racial trait system, and extended combat feat chains, everything in *Iron Lore* is compatible with the *Monster Manual*'s CR/EL system and works just like in D&D. *–M.F.*

BRINGING IN THE OLD GUARD





This July, fans of George R.R. Martin's masterful fantasy series, A Song of Ice and Fire, will no doubt be singing the praises of Guardians of Order and their new *A Game of Thrones* roleplaying game. The Deluxe Limited Edition *A Game of Thrones* RPG introduces you to the world of Westeros, along with its noble houses—the Starks, Lannisters, Tullys, and more.

Guardians of Order is also reaching back to the early days of roleplaying this summer with the rerelease of the world of *Tékumel: Empire of the Petal Throne*. Tékumel is a far future fantasy setting with aliens and lost science that revolves around a Central American and Indian mythos. Created by professional linguist M.A.R. Barker, *Tékumel* was first printed by TSR in 1976. In fact, *Tékumel* articles even appeared in some of the earliest issues of DRAGON (see DRAGON #4, for example). Now, Guardians of Order has printed a new core RPG book containing everything you'll need to play in this fully-realized world, including a terrific poster-sized map.

Check out all of Guardians of Order's *A Game of Thrones*, *Tékumel*, d20, Tri-Stat, and other releases at **guardiansorder.com**. *–S.B. & M.L.F.*

MINI OF THE MONTH

For a lot of us, by the time we enter a gaming store to pick up a miniature, we already have a pretty good idea of what we want it to look like—usually an image swiped wholesale from a favorite piece of fantasy art. The question Dark Sword Miniatures (**darkswordminiatures.com**) wants you to ask yourself is: Why waste time combing the aisles for figures with a vague resemblance when you could have the exact thing?

Uninterested in sculpting anything but the very best, the crew at Dark Sword model no less than the legendary images of Larry Elmore and Keith Parkinson, with future Masterworks lines planned around the art of Clyde Caldwell and Jeff Easley.

This particular red dragon miniature comes from Elmore's *Crimson Dawn*, and can be found in Elmore Dragons Set #2. Smaller humanoid miniatures, drawn from a wide variety of his other paintings and sketches, are sold in sets of six.

Your favorite art, as interpreted by some of the best sculptors to ever squeeze life from pewter—they don't call these puppies Masterworks for nothing. *–J.S.*

THE CHIPS ARE DOWN

Gaming icon Peter Adkison is back at it with Hidden City Games's (**cloutfantasyusa.com**) debut creation, Clout Fantasy. Part *Magic: The Gathering* and part Pog, Clout Fantasy aims to bring physical skill into collectible gaming. Players begin with a stack of chips representing the armies and abilities of their chosen faction and take turns tossing them into a predetermined game area. Once thrown, the chips take on a life of their own: troops move and attack each other, relics and bases provide valuable bonuses, and actions range from poisoning to possession—all depending on the physical distances involved. Featuring art from old school fan favorites like Larry Elmore and Phil and Kaja Foglio, as well as new favorites Michael Phillippi and Brian Snoddy, these ain't your grandpa's tiddlywinks. *–J.S.*

RETURN TO CAULDRON

This month DUNGEON's epic Shackled City Adventure Path releases in one conveniently hardbound volume! Enter the city of Cauldron, a merchant's paradise built into the caldera of a dormant volcano. To thwart the machinations of evil cultists, players explore haunted jungle ruins, slay dragons, and descend into the Abyss itself. Does your party have what it takes?

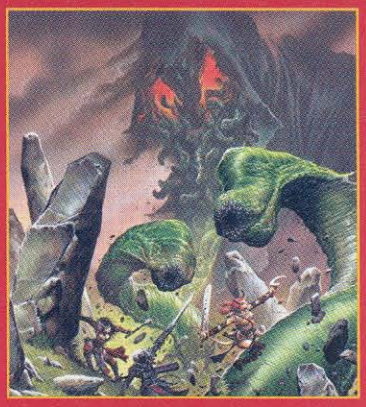
Updated and refined for 3.5 rules, this 420-page tome includes all eleven original adventures plus dozens of new illustrations, new bridging material, and a new installment penned by fan favorite Christopher Perkins. Rounding out the package is a massive map booklet featuring a fully-detailed 8-panel map of the City of Cauldron. Designed to take players from 1st to 20th level, the Shackled City Adventure Path is the largest full-color official D&D adventure ever published. Available now at **paizo.com**. *–J.S.*

EXTREME SCREEN

Just what every EBERRON DM needs—a setting-customized screen featuring art by Wayne Reynolds. Beyond the usual DM tables inside, you'll find a listing of all the dragon-marked houses and associated guilds plus the days and months of the EBERRON calendar year. As a bonus, the package includes a poster map of Khorvaire, featuring new locations, roads, and more. *–S.B.*

DUNGEON THIS MONTH

DUNGEON #124



The Whispering Cairn

by Erik Mona

In the corrupt mining town of Diamond Lake, a handful of would-be adventurers gather to explore an ancient tomb. What they find within the Whispering Cairn dates back to the legendary Wind Dukes of Aaqa, and presages the advent of the Age of Worms, an era of darkness, decay, and writhing doom. An Age of Worms Adventure Path adventure for 1st-level characters.

Backdrop: Diamond Lake

by Erik Mona

Kick off DUNGEON'S new 12-adventure Age of Worms Adventure Path campaign with this overview of Diamond Lake, a run-down mining community nestled in hills laden with the tombs of a dozen lost civilizations. Includes a huge poster map by Robert Lazzaretti!

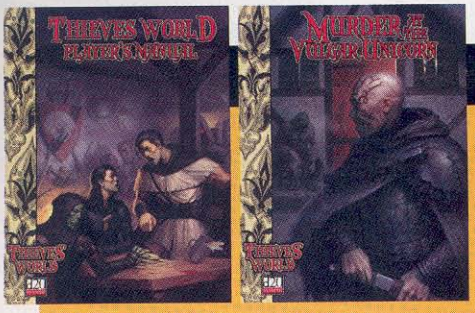
Maure Castle: Chambers of Antiquities

By Robert J. Kuntz

Deep under the ruins of Maure Castle lie the Chambers of Antiquities, a series of vaults designed to store ancient and deadly magic items. A continuation of last year's hit "Maure Castle," "Chambers of Antiquities" is a D&D adventure for 16th-level characters.

Plus

"Temple of the Scopion God," part two of the three-part "Shards of EBERRON" Campaign Arc.



GREEN RONIN FINDS SANCTUARY

1979 saw the release of two important books for sword and sorcery fans: the premiere hardback edition of the ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS *Dungeon Master's Guide* and the first anthology in the Thieves' World series. These books were connected by more than just genre, however. Both stressed a collaborative style of storytelling, AD&D through the roleplaying experience, and Thieves' World through its author-friendly approach to shared world fiction. Under the direction of editors Lynn Abbey and Robert Asprin, the Thieves' World project attracted such notable scribes of the fantastic as Poul Anderson, Marion Zimmer Bradley, and C. J. Cherryh, who came together to create one of the most memorable settings in modern fantasy: Sanctuary.

It didn't take publishers long to recognize Sanctuary's potential for gaming. In the early 1980s, both Chaosium and FASA released Thieves' World products that proved very successful with gamers, for reasons that are no mystery to Lynn Abbey. "Sanctuary was deliberately created as a place where the authors would feel comfortable setting any kind of story about any sort of character," she explains. "Whatever a story needs, it can be found somewhere in our dark, downtrodden, yet somehow optimistic city... and whatever a gamer needs can be found there as well."

Little surprise, then, that the release of the first original Thieves' World anthologies in a dozen years—*Turning Points and Enemies of Fortune*—inspired another publisher to set up shop in Sanctuary. This July, Green Ronin introduces a whole new generation of gamers to Thieves' World. The line kicks off with the *Thieves' World Player's Manual*, a 192-page hardcover providing an overview of the setting and plenty of game mechanics material. The book also boasts an original Lynn Abbey short story, "A Tale of Two Cities." Future products include a more detailed guide to Sanctuary, an adventure set at the famous Vulgar Unicorn, and a gazetteer of Thieves' World.

While the Green Ronin books focus on Sanctuary as it exists in the most recent anthologies, fans of the classic era will find the RPG tomes full of new information about their favorite characters and locales, all carefully screened by Lynn Abbey herself. "I've lost count of the number of questions, messages, and files that have flown around the world in our quest to get things right," she explains. "I can assure Thieves' World fans that everything being added to the milieu—and there's a lot—has been explicitly approved. The Green Ronin supplements will be canonic Thieves' World." –*J.L.*

RPGA UPDATE

by Stephen Radney-MacFarland
RPGA Content Manager

Summer's in full swing, and that means it's convention season. Sitting on the fence about attending one of the big shows? Allow me an attempt to entice you with our great convention programming.

Origins International Games Expo 2005 (June 30 to July 3—Columbus, Ohio)

This year we're featuring 18 different adventures—more than half of them DUNGEONS & DRAGONS—to feed your roleplaying habit. Our showcase event is the LIVING GREYHAWK special delve event, *CORS5-02 Mine of Eyes*, taking you to the parched Abbor Alz Hills to disrupt the machinations of duergar and their shadowy master. The adventure is part of the "Blight on Bright Sands" campaign arc, designed as an introduction to the LIVING GREYHAWK campaign.

The other RPGA games offered at the show range from Star Wars, to *d20 MODERN*, to d20 System horror and espionage adventures, allowing those with a hankering for genre jumping an entire weekend of giddy glee.

You can find out more information about Origins at **originsgames.com**.

Gen Con (August 18 to 21—Indianapolis, Indiana)

At this show the RPGA doesn't only provide a score of adventures, but we host the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS Open Championship—the premiere competitive D&D event! In this characters-provided team bash you compete against hundreds of other dungeon-delving, rule-lawyering, monster-smacking D&D fanatics for the bragging rights and rewards entitled to the group crowned D&D champions. This year's adventure—the sequel to last year's *Shards of EBERRON*—is also a D&D Open Championship first, as it features psionic characters and challenges! Find out more information about Gen Con Indy at **gencon.com**.

He comes in the winter, compassion and trust;
He dances in spring with your love and your lust;
He calls in the summer and serve him you must;
He withers in autumn; you save him from dust.
Your father, your mother, your lover, your child
His son, his daughter, his minion beguiled.
And now that you've offered your life and your soul,
He'll drag you to ruin and swallow you whole.
—Old gypsy song, warning of Fraz-Urb'luu's cult

by James Jacobs • illustrated by Andrew Hou • cartography by Chris West

Demonomicon of Iggwilv: Fraz-Urb'luu

Prince of Deception

For countless eons, Fraz-Urb'luu, Prince of Deception, reigned supreme as the lord of the Abyssal realm of Hollow's Heart. The *Demonomicon* of the witch queen Iggwilv records him as one of the primal lords of the Abyss, one of the first demons to rise to dominance. This claim might or might not be true, but images of this demon prince have been found in ruins so ancient that no books remain that speak of their builders. His sect is one of the oldest known demon cults. He has never been the most powerful of the lords of the Abyss, yet he has weathered the rise and fall of countless enemies and allies. Through it all, Fraz-Urb'luu remains a terrible constant amid the writhing change of Abyssal nobility.

Yet even eternity can be finite. When an upstart human mage named Zagig Yragerne dared summon him to the Material Plane, Fraz-Urb'luu viewed it as little more than an opportunity to spend a few weeks in the mortal realm, savaging and ruining a few unexpecting nations. Yet when the demon prince manifested in Zagig's great summoning chamber, the wizard confronted the demon with a powerful artifact known as the *Ichor Lance* in an attempt to carve away a portion of his fiendish essence. When Zagig tried to use the artifact on him, Fraz-Urb'luu took it in his hands and disjoined the artifact's power.

Yet something went wrong. As the artifact's magic was torn away and ruined, Fraz-Urb'luu felt the same force rebounding into his own being. In an instant, his powers were stripped from him, and Zagig's true purpose became clear. The *Ichor Lance* was simply bait, and now that Fraz-Urb'luu had taken it, Zagig had no problem using his magic to imprison the Prince of Deception in a massive stone bas-relief deep within the dungeons below Castle Greyhawk. For more than 200 years Fraz-Urb'luu remained imprisoned there. His only entertainment were the few thieves, intruders, and explorers who stumbled into his presence, for Zagig had given him leave to riddle and torment those unfotunate enough to encounter him. Yet the dungeons beneath Castle Greyhawk are vast, and as the years wore on, Fraz-Urb'luu's "visitors" came less frequently. Eventually, he was left alone with nothing but his anger. For hundreds of years his rage grew until a fateful day not long ago, when two adventurers came upon a curious bas-relief deep underground and unwittingly followed its advice.

Fraz-Urb'luu, Prince of Deception

Huge Outsider (Chaotic, Evil, Tanar'ri)
Hit Dice: 34d8+476 (629 hp)
Initiative: +9
Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares), fly 50 ft. (average)
Armor Class: 41 (–2 size, +5 Dex, +23 natural, +5 insight), touch 18, flat-footed 36
Base Attack/Grapple: +34/+56
Attack: Slam +36 melee (1d8+29)*
Full Attack: 2 slams +36 melee (1d8+29)* and bite +34 melee (2d6+22)* and tail +34 melee (2d8+22)*
Space/Reach: 15 ft./15 ft.
Special Attacks: Constrict 2d8+14, *deception*, disjunctive touch, improved grab, spell-like abilities, *summon tanar'ri*

Special Qualities: Damage reduction 20/epic, darkvision 120 ft., immune to electricity, immune to mind-affecting effects, immune to poison, inscrutable, item master, low-light vision, outsider traits, resistance to acid 10, cold 10, and fire 10, *see invisibility*, spell resistance 36, telepathy 200 ft.
Saves: Fort +33, Ref +24, Will +24
Abilities: Str 39, Dex 20, Con 39, Int 24, Wis 21, Cha 27
Skills: Bluff +45, Concentration +51, Diplomacy +49, Disguise +47 (+49 acting), Intimidate +47, Knowledge (arcana) +44, Knowledge (geography) +44, Knowledge (history) +44, Knowledge (the planes) +44, Listen +42, Search +44, Sense Motive +42, Spellcraft +46, Spot +42, Use Magic Device +45 (+47 scrolls)
Feats: Augment Summoning, Awesome Blow, Craft Staff, Dark Speech**, Deceitful, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder, Multiattack, Power Attack, Quicken Spell-like Ability (*greater dispel magic*), Spell Focus (conjuration)
Environment: The Abyss
Organization: Solitary, or Fraz-Urb'luu plus 2d4 skurchurs, 1d6 succubi, and 1 Hollow Rajah rakshasa
Challenge Rating: 28
Treasure: Quadruple standard
Alignment: Chaotic evil
Advancement: —
*Includes adjustments for 15-point Power Attack.
**Dark Speech is a feat from the *Book of Vile Darkness*; if you don't have access to this book, replace this feat with Cleave.

This hulking menace stands just over eighteen feet in height, despite his hunched posture. His muscular, gorillalike body is covered with short, coarse hair of a pale blue hue. His feet are broad and splayed, and his hands are large but the fingers relatively stubby and tipped with long jagged talons. Two vast black batlike wings protrude from his back, and his tail is long and hairless, with a gray base fading to a razor-sharp blue tip. His head is bald and gray-skinned, save for tufts of ragged hair hanging from his jowls. Large and ragged ears protrude from the centre of his skull to well above its pointed, ridged peak. This eyes are relatively small but burn with cold blue light. Yet the most terrible aspect of his visage is his mouth, which is overly large and filled with huge fangs.

Great Fraz-Urb'luu has only recently returned to dominance over his realm in the Abyss, having spent centuries imprisoned on the Material Plane. He lost a notorious weapon and magic item during this time, and has developed a tremendous hatred of the Material Plane and its inhabitants as a result. Humans, in particular, are his most hated foes, for it was a human who imprisoned him against his will. For now, Fraz-Urb'luu strives to regain control of Hollow's Heart (the 176th layer of the Abyss), but soon plans to launch a series of attacks against the Material Plane, his ultimate goal being its utter ruin.

The demon's traditional symbol is the *Staff of Fraz-Urb'luu*, a jeweled scepter of adamantine cast at the end to resemble a tangle of five bestial arms that splay outward to grip a horned and fanged humanoid skull. However, since his escape from the Material Plane and return to the Abyss, he has largely abandoned this symbol, and today it is akin to his realm on the Abyss—mutable, ever-changing, yet always terrible to behold. The one common feature that runs throughout his various symbols is that of a partially devoured human skull in which the eyes remain, yet have been rotated in their sockets so as to gaze upon the ruined interior.

Combat

Traditionally, Fraz-Urb'luu preferred to deal with enemies through deception and guile. Today, the Prince of Deception is just as likely to crush, maim, and grind his foes to paste with his formidable weaponry.

When combat seems likely, Fraz-Urb'luu typically tries to use his transformation and illusion powers to close the ground between himself and his enemy. Often, he'll summon demons or other monsters to distract his foes while he moves into melee reach. Once in melee, he assumes his true form and attacks, favoring human targets over all others. If he's able to grab a foe with his tail, he takes a –20 penalty on further grapple checks with his tail so he can use his other weapons against other foes. Fraz-Urb'luu almost always fights with a 15-point Power Attack (his stats above reflect this tactic); he lowers his Power Attack only if he seems to miss his foes with at least two attacks a round. He also casts *greater magic fang* on all his natural attacks daily, and thus generally gains a +5 enhancement bonus on his attack and damage rolls (these bonuses have also been incorporated into his stats above).

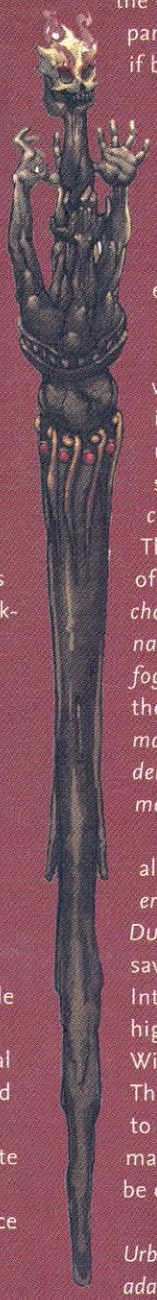
Constrict (Ex): Fraz-Urb'luu deals automatic tail damage with a successful grapple check.

***Deception* (Sp)**: Perhaps Fraz-Urb'luu's most notorious ability is his knack for deceiving other powerful demons into believing they have been summoned by a foolish mortal. He can attempt to deceive another demon in this manner once per day as a free action. He can summon an advanced unique demon with class levels in this manner (such as Unhath, a marilith sorcerer who serves as one of Graz'zt's idle consorts), or he can summon one of the lords or princes of the Abyss itself, like Demogorgon, Pazuzu, Zuggtmoy, or Malcanthet. The demon can resist the summons with a successful DC 28 Will save. Since this ability is a free action, Fraz-Urb'luu often uses *teleport* to retreat elsewhere just before the deceived demon appears. Demons deceived in this manner quickly realize what has happened, but nevertheless often fly into a fury and attack anything in sight with a terrible rage.

Although not beyond his ability, Fraz-Urb'luu generally avoids deceiving demons with a CR of more than four higher than his own, since he doesn't enjoy inviting the wrath of such powerful fiends.

Note that since *deception* summons demons rather than calling them, they cannot perform summoning effects of their own. Likewise, they are not actually slain if defeated in combat; rather, they

Fraz-Urb'luu's Staff (Major Artifact)



Once Fraz-Urb'luu's coveted sign of power, this potent and notorious staff allowed the demon lord to bend incredibly huge armies of demons and other creatures to his will. He used the staff to command the allegience of many powerful and unique demons, and no small number of champions of good found themselves enslaved by its might. This artifact is a jeweled scepter of adamantine cast at the end to resemble a tangle of five bestial arms that splay outward to grip a horned and fanged humanoid skull. Thick oily red smoke leaks upward from the skull's eye sockets. The demon lord's enemies tried many times to capture or destroy the staff, but until Fraz-Urb'luu was imprisoned under Castle Greyhawk none of these attempts met with success.

Today, even though Fraz-Urb'luu himself is once again free, his staff remains missing. Some rumors hold that Fraz-Urb'luu's staff was destroyed by an alliance of demon lords, while others maintain that the staff is hidden in a vault on the Material Plane, said at times to be located in a dwarven citadel, below a great city's sewers, or in a remote wizard's mountain keep. In a way, all of these are correct, since the staff was sundered and the parts scattered to ensure that Fraz-Urb'luu could never reclaim the weapon. Unfortunately, the parts retain their magic, and if brought together on Fraz-Urb'luu's abyssal lair they'll instantly reform into the mighty artifact.

While held, *Fraz-Urb'luu's Staff* automaticaly extends and enlarges any enchantment spell cast by the wielder, including those cast from staffs and wands (including the staff itself). The staff can be used to cast the following spells at will: *charm person, command,* and *suggestion.* Three times a day, the owner of the Staff can use it to cast *charm monster* (DC 21), *dominate person* (DC 23), or *mind fog* (DC 23). Once per day, the owner can use it to cast *mass charm monster* (DC 26), *demand* (DC 26), or *dominate monster* (DC 27).

Fraz-Urb-luu's Staff can also be used as a *rod of rulership* (see page 236 of the DUNGEON MASTER'S *Guide*), save that only creatures with Intelligence scores of 16 or higher are entitled to a DC 22 Will save to negate the effect. The staff can be used for up to three days per week in this manner; the duration need not be continuous.

If used as a weapon, *Fraz-Urb'luu's Staff* functions as a *+5 adamantine unholy greatclub.*

CL 20th; Weight 8 lb.

return from whence they came in such an event. In any case, a deceived demon vanishes automatically after two minutes.

Deception is the equivalent of an epic-level spell. An epic spell has no fixed level. For purposes of Concentration checks, spell resistance, and other possible situations where spell level is important, an epic spell is treated as if it were a 10th-level spell. The saving throw against an epic spell has a DC of 20 + your relevant ability score modifier; in this case, +8 (Fraz-Urb'luu's Charisma modifier).

Disjunctive Touch (Su): As a standard action, Fraz-Urb'luu can absorb, ruin, and negate even the most powerful magical effects by touch.

If Fraz-Urb'luu wishes to disjoin all spell effects on a creature or object, he need only to make a successful touch attack. The creature or object touched must then make a DC 35 Will save or all active spell effects or the ongoing effects of supernatural abilities are immediately disjoined. This includes permanent effects like *bestow curse* that cannot normally be dispelled by *dispel magic,* but does not include instantaneous effects like those created by *flesh to stone, feeblemind,* or *insanity.*

If Fraz-Urb'luu wishes to disjoin a magic item, the item must be unattended or he must first successfully grapple the item's current possessor. He then targets one item, which must make a successful DC 35 Will save (using its own save or its owner's save, whichever is better). Failure indicates that the item is immediately and permanently turned into a nonmagical item.

Fraz-Urb'luu has a 20% chance of destroying an *antimagic field* with this special attack. Even artifacts are subject to his disjunctive touch, although there is only a 20% chance of actually affecting such powerful items. Each time Fraz-Urb'luu destroys an artifact he must make a DC 25 Will save or lose all spell-like and supernatural special attacks and special qualities for 100 years. Although Fraz-Urb'luu normally only fails such a saving throw on a natural 1, he's still wary of disjoining artifacts—he lost his powers once before when he destroyed the *Ichor Lance.*

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, Fraz-Urb'luu must hit with his tail attack. He can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If he wins the grapple check, he establishes a hold and can either constrict or use his disjunctive touch.

Spell-Like Abilities (Sp): At will—*astral projection, baleful polymorph* (DC 23), *blasphemy* (DC 25), *deeper darkness, desecrate, detect good, detect law, detect thoughts* (DC 20), *greater dispel magic, greater magic fang, greater teleport, hypnotic pattern* (DC 20), *mirage arcana* (DC 23), *misdirection* (DC 20), *persistent image* (DC 23), *programmed image* (DC 24), *summon monster VII, telekinesis* (DC 23), *tongues, unhallow, unholy aura* (DC 26), *unholy blight* (DC 22), or *veil* (DC 24);

3/day—quickened *greater dispel magic*; 1/day—*plane shift* (DC 24), *power word blind*, *prismatic spray* (DC 25), *shapechange*, *summon monster IX*, *symbol of death* (DC 26), *symbol of fear* (DC 24), *symbol of insanity* (DC 26), *symbol of persuasion* (DC 24). Caster level 20th.

Summon Tanar'ri (Sp): Once per day, Fraz-Urb'luu can automatically summon 1d4 vrocks or 2d4 skurchurs, or he has a 75% chance to summon 1d3 nalfeshnees.

Inscrutable (Su): Fraz-Urb'luu is immune to most divination spells and effects. Attempts to *scry* upon him are automatically foiled by a *screen* effect (caster level 20). Fraz-Urb'luu can suppress this defense by concentrating.

Item Master (Ex): Although not an actual spellcaster, Fraz-Urb'luu can use any staff as if all of the staff's spells were on his spell list. Spell effects generated from a staff wielded by Fraz-Urb'luu manifest at caster level 20 (or the staff's caster level, whichever is higher). Fraz-Urb'luu can also create any staff as though he had the necessary feats, prerequisite spells, and other requirements.

Fraz-Urb'luu's Aspect

Fraz-Urb'luu is loath to travel directly to the Material Plane, since the memories of his imprisonment there are still painful and fresh in his mind. When he requires a direct hand in matters there, he is more likely to send his aspect, a physical embodiment of a small portion of his life force. In most cases, this embodiment is a manifestation of his rage and hatred for humanity. Fraz-Urb'luu's aspect looks identical to his true form, although its presence is much less overwhelming and it only stands twelve feet tall. Sometimes, his faithful can use spells like *planar ally* or *planar binding* to call upon his aspect. The stats presented here are representative of the least of Fraz-Urb'luu's aspects; other, more powerful incarnations of his aspects certainly exist. For more general information on aspects, consult pages 46 and 47 of the *Miniatures Handbook*.

Aspect of Fraz-Urb'luu **CR 10**

CE Large outsider (chaotic, evil, extraplanar, tanar'ri)

Init +1

Senses darkvision 60 ft., *see invisibility*, Listen +16, Spot +16

Languages Common, Abyssal, Draconic, Giant; telepathy 100 ft.

AC 24, touch 10, flat-footed 23

hp 115 (10 HD); DR 5/epic

Immune electricity, poison

Resist acid 10, cold 10, fire 10

Fort +14, **Ref** +8, **Will** +10

Spd 30 ft. (6 squares), fly 30 ft. (average)

Atk 2 slams +15 (1d6+6) and bite +13 (1d8+3) and tail +13 (1d8+3)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Base Atk +10; **Grp** +20

Atk Options Power Attack, Awesome Blow

Special Actions improved grab, constrict 1d6+3

Abilities Str 22, Dex 12, Con 24, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 20

Feats Awesome Blow, Improved Bull Rush, Multiattack, Power Attack

Skills Bluff +18, Diplomacy +7, Intimidate +20, Knowledge (arcana) +16, Knowledge (geography) +16, Knowledge (history) +16, Knowledge (the planes) +16, Listen +16, Search +16, Sense Motive +16, Spot +16, Use Magic Device +18

Fraz-Urb'luu's Goals

Before his imprisonment below Castle Greyhawk, Fraz-Urb'luu was content to dwell in his personally tailored realm. The Prince of Deception had complete control over his Abyssal domain, and could reform its appearance with but a thought. The ability to cause mountains to sink into oceans, to cause chasms to swallow entire cities, and to call up massive guardians of stone and lava made his lair a difficult place for his enemies to assault. Fraz-Urb'luu knew this and, as a result, only rarely ventured out of his domain. Instead, he was content to spend his time tormenting his minions and the legions of prisoners they brought before him in hopeful attempts to curry his momentary favor, or deceiving rival demon lords and ladies into appearing in his court and taking from them what he desired (usually entertainment in the form of their humiliation, but sometimes partaking in more gluttonous or carnal amusements). For a time, Fraz-Urb'luu counted all the rulers of the Abyss as his enemies, yet they could never set aside their personal differences long enough to forge an alliance capable of taking him in his lair.

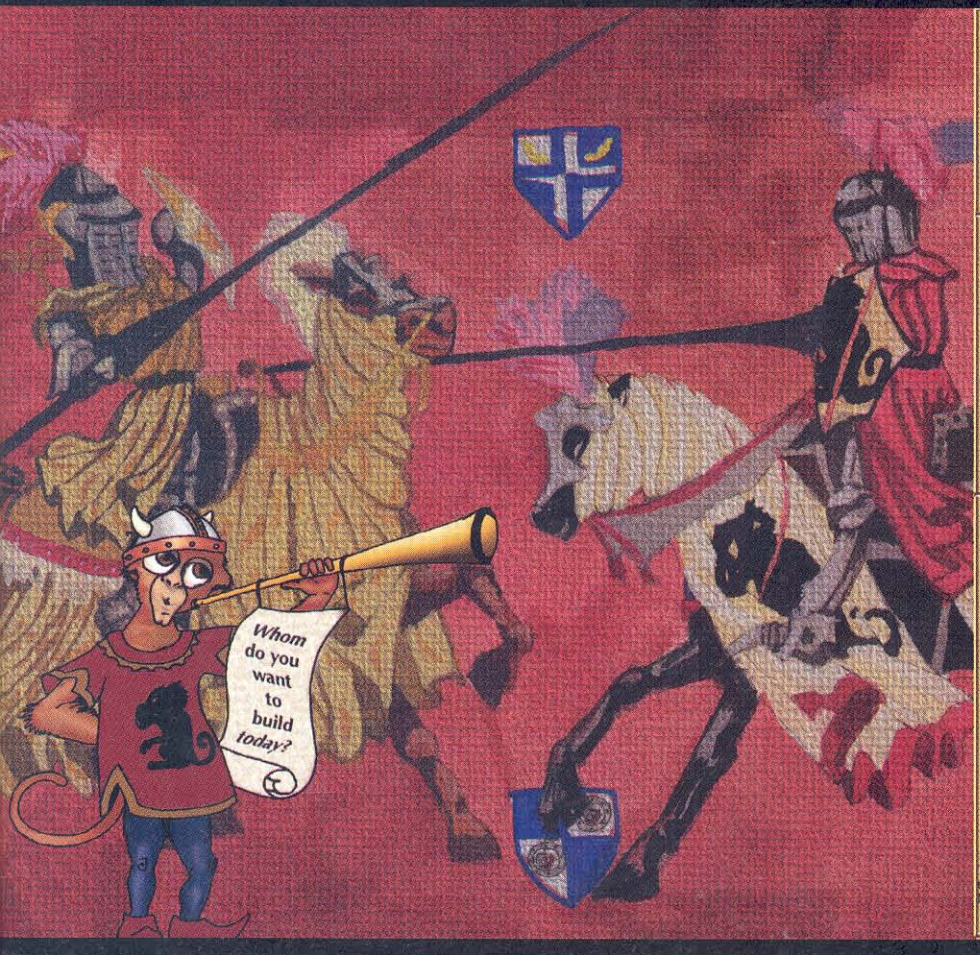
So a few of his cannier enemies did the next best thing. Zagig had been formulating plans for the imprisonment of Fraz-Urb'luu for some time and had engaged the witch queen Iggwilv's support and advice for the project. It was through her influence and connections that the demons came to grant Zagig the *Ichor Lance*, and provided him with crucial hints into Fraz-Urb'luu's probable truename. When the Prince of Deception became trapped, his enemies descended upon his realm in terrible endless waves of devastation. Without their master, the denizens were unable to rely on the realm's mutability, and they were slaughtered completely. Not long after, the domain itself collapsed. Mountains withered away, seas filled with gravel, forests burned to the ground, and deserts blew away on the netherwind. In the space of only a few years the realm had been reduced to nothingness. All that remained was an endless white plain of powdery sand under an empty black sky.

It was also at this time that Fraz-Urb'luu's enemies seized control of his infamous staff. It was with this powerful artifact that Fraz-Urb'luu commanded such massive legions of demonspawn, and through its power that he could control the nature and shape of his realm. Each demon lord tried to claim it as his own, and in the ensuing battle the staff was torn into five pieces, each of which was cast throughout the multiverse. Some of these shards have since been recovered

by wizards, cultists, liches, and others who covet magic, while others were captured by agents of law or good and sealed away in vaults or hidden tombs in the far corners of reality.

Fraz-Urb'luu remained imprisoned on the Material Plane for well over two hundred years. Zagig refined his powers over that time, using similar methods of deific imprisonment to capture and imprison nine demigods in specially prepared cells deeper in the dungeons below Castle Greyhawk. Eventually, Zagig passed from the world, leaving his ruins to chance and time. Eventually, one of the imprisoned demigods (Iuz the Old) managed to tear free from his prison. The resulting strain on the other cells caused a cascade of magical failures, and in that time most of the other imprisoned deities escaped. Yet Fraz-Urb'luu's prison remained too strong. Only when a pair of adventurers discovered the bas-relief he had been bound inside was the demon prince able to capitalize on the weakened state of his prison. He tricked the adventurers into performing a set of tasks, and with the final quest they inadvertently set the Prince of Deception free. After a desperate attempt to call upon one of their gods for aid, Fraz-Urb'luu was delighted to learn that most of his powers had returned during his long imprisonment. He took up his "saviors" in his great arms and returned to his realm on the Abyss—only to find it gone, along with his coveted staff. With this final insult, something within Fraz-Urb'luu changed forever. The terrible rage and hatred he had nursed during his imprisonment bloomed, inspiring him with a rage that now infuses his every fiber and thought.

Fraz-Urb'luu has spent the better part of the past twenty-five years rebuilding his realm. Known as Hollow's Heart, this Abyssal layer still consists of vast realms of white sand and black sky. Here and there, pockets of terrain have appeared where minor unique demons have laid claims and learned, on a smaller scale, to mold the terrain to their will. Fraz-Urb'luu has routed and ruined most of these demonic squatters, and has slowly been reshaping things to his liking. Yet without his staff, the task is arduous and lengthy. In addition, Fraz-Urb'luu must constantly defend his realm from demonic incursion, as the other demon lords have not forgotten their hatred of the Prince of Deception. So far, none have managed to force him from his home, although Graz'zt, Demogorgon, and Socothbenoth all came close before Fraz-Urb'luu managed to repulse their armies from his realm. The process of rebuilding is, as a result, slow and painful. Backslides are all too frequent, and with each one he is reminded of his imprisonment and the theft and destruction of his staff. Despite the hardships, he continues to make progress. The terrain of his realm grows daily, as do the ranks of his subjected demon slaves and thralls. Once Fraz-Urb'luu has reworked his realm to his liking and gathered what he deems to be an acceptable army, he'll be ready to begin his crusade against humanity.



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Fraz-Urb'luu dreams of a war against the Material Plane. Whereas most of the other demon lords see humanity as a fertile field in which to plant seeds of cruelty, hatred, and perversion, to mature into souls ripe for plucking, Fraz-Urb'luu sees only an insult to his powerful ego. As long as even one human being lives, he cannot release the powerful rage Zagig gifted to him, and so Fraz-Urb'luu plans a crusade of red ruin. In his dreams, he sees himself leading an army of demons, undead, and other monstosities against the whole of humanity, a war he has no intention of ending until all that remains of the Material Plane is dust.

Fraz-Urb'luu's Cult

The cult of Fraz-Urb'luu can be divided into two distinct groups. The lesser of these two groups is loosely organized into cells. Each of these cells operates independently, with the leaders of each in contact with the leaders of other cells. These groups focus their efforts on corrupting secular establishments like guilds, governments, and other organizations. By infiltrating these groups, the cults can leech off the profits generated by them to aid in funding the more dangerous cults.

The greater, more dangerous cults are known as the Cults of Deception. A Cult of Deception typically consists of a dozen or so members, most of which have at least a few levels in cleric. Clerics of Fraz-Urb'luu have access to the domains of Chaos, Evil, Trickery, and War. Fraz-Urb'luu's favored weapon is the greatclub. If you use the *Book of Vile Darkness*, his clerics also have access to the Demonic domain.

In addition to clerical servitors, a thrall of Fraz-Urb'luu always leads a Cult of Deception. While they worship Fraz-Urb'luu, they mask this worship in the guise of another deity, typically a good-aligned lesser deity. Using deception, illusions, enchantment, and other forms of trickery, these cultists operate small shrines located in rural areas and outwardly often do a lot of good for communities that otherwise don't have access to powerful healing. As a general rule, a Cult of Deception won't charge money for their spellcasting services, since the lesser cults who siphon money and other resources from the guilds and governments fund them.

Sacrifices to Fraz-Urb'luu from the Cults of Deception occur only once per year, but the cult typically takes that entire year preparing for the sacrifice, since the sacrifice must be someone who has been deceived into joining the "religion." The cultists prefer to use a lawful good victim, gaining the victim's trust and friendship and support over the year. Often, one of the cult members volunteers

to become the sacrifice's lover. During this year, the cult does everything it can to ensure that the chosen sacrifice is comfortable, happy, and ignorant of any deception. As the time for sacrifice draws near, the cult reveals to the victim that things are not well. Perhaps the high priest has an incurable disease, the church is running low on funds, or some other rival church is about to force them to change locations or move out of town. Usually, these conflicts are completely false, but a clever cult builds on existing problems to further cloak the truth from its victim. The cult reveals to its victim that if he does a few important tasks for the church, things might just be salvageable. Usually, the cult sends its sacrifice on two or three relatively easy missions, each of which (ideally) seems to be for the greater good on the surface but underneath accomplishes something horrible or evil.

When the time comes for sacrifice, the cult reveals to the victim that things are more dire than even its leaders had believed. They'll paint as bleak a picture as possible for the victim, suggesting that it is the displeasure of their deity that has caused this terrible doom. Further, they insinuate that only by sacrificing one of their own to their god can things be made right. If one of the cultists has taken the sacrifice as a lover, the cult selects this cultist as the sacrifice, hoping that the intended victim offers to take his lover's place. Otherwise, the cult tries other methods to get the victim to offer himself as the sacrifice. Often, the cult infers that a sacrifice is welcomed into the afterlife as a martyr and a hero, and that the deity grants the sacrifice immortal wealth, power, and glory. If the character is truly worthy and willing to be sacrificed for the good of the church, the cultists even hint that their deity has been known to restore such favored minions to life on the Material Plane, often with vast increases in power.

Of course, these are all ruses to get the victim to willingly sacrifice himself to Fraz-Urb'luu. Usually, such victims go to their graves without realizing they've been tricked. Those sacrificed to Fraz-Urb'luu in such a manner do not go on to their normally deserved afterlives; rather, they are consigned to the wretched city of Zoragmelok in Hollow's Heart. Fraz-Urb'luu himself accepts the sacrifice in the guise of whatever god the cult had been falsely worshiping and places the character's spirit in what seems a perfectly idyllic afterlife. However, these rewards are false and Fraz-Urb'luu takes great delight in slowly stripping away the disguise over the course of many months or even years. Eventually, the victim realizes the truth—by which point it is too late. Only then does Fraz-Urb'luu pay the victim's soul a personal visit to explain just what he has done. The Prince of Deception uses his powers of illusion to grant a vision of how the sacrifice's delusions have harmed those he loved in life and allowed evil and chaos to spread, and finally, when the victim has sunk as far as he can into despair, he is consumed by the demon lord. Characters slain in this manner cannot be brought back to life without direct divine intervention.

Thrall of Fraz-Urb'luu

Thralls of Fraz-Urb'luu are deceivers and charlatans. They work behind the scenes, worming their wiles into the minds of nobles, leaders, and heroes and manipulating events for the glory of the Prince of Deception. When exposed, thralls of Fraz-Urb'luu are no less dangerous, combining powerful spellcasting with formidable melee skills. They have little problem dealing with those they cannot influence in more subtle manners. Yet their most important function is to seduce and delude powerful adventurers, tricking them into unknowingly accepting Fraz-Urb'luu into their minds and souls, making them clay for the Prince of Deception to mold into new soldiers for his armies.

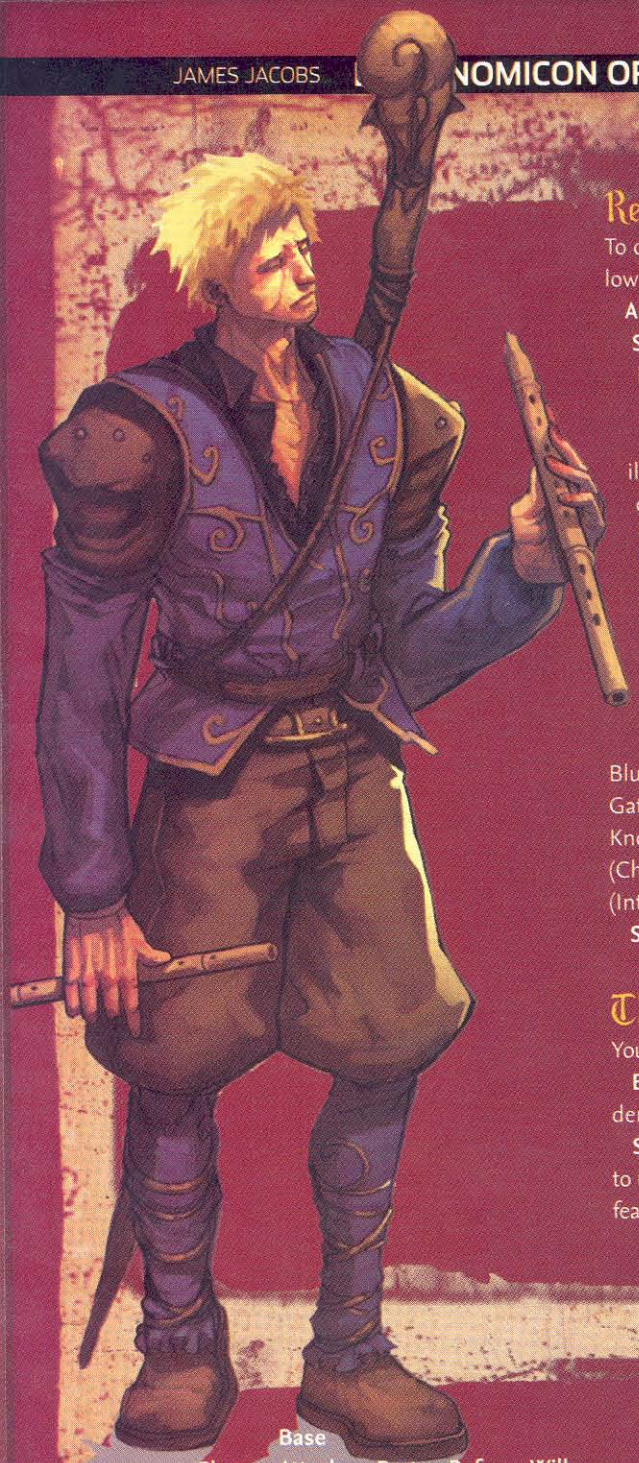
Bards and warlocks make the best thralls of Fraz-Urb'luu, since their abilities allow them to qualify for this prestige class quite easily. Sorcerers and wizards (especially illusionists) also make excellent thralls for the Prince of Deception. Certain clerics and favored souls can qualify for the class as well, if they focus on domains that grant additional illusion spells. Despite their preferred class, many thralls of Fraz-Urb'luu take a few levels of rogue or fighter to augment their skills or melee capabilities.

Class Features

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Thralls of Fraz-Urb'luu gain proficiency with the greatclub and all simple weapons. They do not gain any proficiency with armor or shields.

Spells per Day/Spells or Invocations Known: At every level save for 1st, 5th, and 9th, a thrall of Fraz-Urb'luu gains new spells per day (and spells known, if applicable) as if he had also gained a level in a spellcasting class to which he belonged before adding the prestige class level. He does not, however, gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained. If he had more than one spellcasting class before becoming a thrall of Fraz-Urb'luu, he must decide to which class to add each level for the purpose of determining spells per day and spells known. If the character had levels in the warlock class, he can instead choose to gain new invocations as if he had also gained a level in warlock.

Deception (Su): At 1st level, a thrall of Fraz-Urb'luu gains the ability of deception. He may use this ability once per day, gaining one additional use each day with each odd-numbered thrall of Fraz-Urb'luu level gained. Activating deception is an immediate action. An immediate action is a free action that can be performed at any time—even when it's not your turn (although you're limited to only one immediate action per round, and cannot use them while you are flat-footed). Activating deception does not provoke an attack of opportunity. Deception can be used in one of three different ways, as chosen from the following options.



Requirements

To qualify to become a thrall of Fraz-Urb'luu, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Alignment: Chaotic evil

Skills: Bluff 10 ranks, Disguise or Forgery 10 ranks, Knowledge (religion) 10 ranks

Languages: Abyssal, Celestial

Feats: Deceitful, Thrall to Demon (Fraz-Urb'luu)

Spells or Invocations: Ability to cast at least five spells from the school of illusion, one of which must be 3rd level. Alternatively, the ability to use three of the following warlock invocations (one of which must be a lesser invocation): *beguiling influence, charm, dark one's own luck, flee the scene, frightful blast, see the unseen,* or *voracious dispelling.*

Special: Must convince or trick an intelligent, non-evil creature to willingly perform an evil act without resorting to mind-affecting magic.

Class Skills

The thrall of Fraz-Urb'luu's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con), Diplomacy (Cha), Disguise (Cha), Forgery (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (any), Listen (Wis), Perform (Cha), Sense Motive (Cha), Sleight of Hand (Dex), Speak Language, Spellcraft (Int), and Use Magic Device (Cha).

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Thrall to Demon [vile]

You supplicate yourself to a demon prince in return for a small measure of power.

Benefit: Once per day, while performing an evil act, you may call upon your demonic patron to add a +1 luck bonus on any one roll.

Special: Once you take this feat, you may not take it again; you may not be a thrall to more than one demon. Nor may you take the Disciple of Darkness feat (a similar feat that binds you to an archdevil). This feat first appeared in *Book of Vile Darkness.*

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per day/Spells or Invocations Known
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Deception 1/day	—
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	Bonus illusion	+1 level of existing class
3rd	+2	+1	+1	+3	Deception 2/day	+1 level of existing class
4th	+3	+1	+1	+4	Bonus illusion	+1 level of existing class
5th	+3	+1	+1	+4	Deception 3/day, staff mastery	—
6th	+4	+2	+2	+5	Bonus illusion	+1 level of existing class
7th	+5	+2	+2	+5	Deception 4/day	+1 level of existing class
8th	+6	+2	+2	+6	Bonus illusion	+1 level of existing class
9th	+6	+3	+3	+6	Deception 5/day, skurchur cohorts	—
10th	+7	+3	+3	+7	*Alter reality*	+1 level of existing class

• *Deceptive Magic*: You can incorporate deception into an illusion spell you cast. This grants a +1 profane bonus to that spell's saving throw DC.

• *Deceptive Summoning*: You can deceive a summoned monster into believing that you are its summoner. In order to use this ability, you must activate deception as a readied action when another creature casts a spell or uses a spell-like ability with the summoning descriptor (which requires a successful Spellcraft check to identify the spell or ability as it is being cast). Make a level check opposed by the caster's level check. If you win this opposed check, the summoned monster follows your commands for the duration of the spell rather than the commands of the creature that summoned the monster. You must be within 30 feet of the caster of the summoning spell to use this ability.

• *Deceptive Will*: You can activate deception to gain a +4 profane bonus on a single Will save. If you succeed in this save, you can immediately make a Bluff check opposed by the caster's Sense Motive check. If you win this opposed roll, the caster is deceived into believing that you failed your saving throw against the spell. You can play along voluntarily with the intended effects if you wish to. If the effect involves telepathic commands from the creature who forced you to make a Will save, you continue to receive them, although you aren't obligated to follow them.

Bonus Illusion: At every even-numbered level, you may select any illusion spell from the sorcerer/wizard spell list and add it to the list of spells you know and can cast. If you are a wizard, the new spell immediately manifests in your spellbook, instantaneously and at no cost to you. If you are a warlock, you instead gain the spell as a spell-like ability, usable once per day. If you spontaneously cast spells, these spells are added to your list of spells known.

The illusion spell you select must be of a spell level equal to or less than your thrall of Fraz-Urb'luu class level.

Staff Mastery (Ex): Upon reaching 5th level, you have mastered the use of magic staffs in emulation of your demonic master's skill with these potent magic items. You can now wield any magic staff as if it were a +1 *greatclub*, at no risk of causing the staff itself damage. In addition, the staff is treated as an evil weapon for the purposes of overcoming damage reduction. You are considered to be proficient with the staff for this purpose.

You can use any magic staff as if its spells were on your spell list. Additionally, you may opt to activate a staff using your own lifeforce rather than expending charges. For each charge that the staff activation would normally consume, you instead take 1 point of Constitution damage. If you don't have a Constitution score, or are for some reason immune to ability score damage, you cannot power a staff with this ability and must use the staff's charges to manifest its spells.

Skurchur Cohorts: At 9th level, you gain the services of two skurchur demons, as if you had taken the demons as cohorts with the Leadership feat. If a skurchur minion is slain, you can gain a replacement after undergoing a 24-hour ritual that requires the sacrifice of an intelligent creature of an ECL of at least 11.

***Alter Reality* (Sp)**: At 10th level, a thrall of Fraz-Urb'luu gains the ability to transform an illusion spell into reality, once per day. This duplicates the effects of a *wish* spell, save that it cannot grant inherent bonuses to ability scores or duplicate any spell of 8th level or higher. The reality to be created must first be manifested with an illusion spell of at least 3rd level before this ability can be used.

Fraz-Urb'luu's Minions

Fraz-Urb'luu's cultists are not his only resources; he often works his will through the actions of other creatures as well. His favored minions are creatures that are naturally deceptive or utilize trickery. Of the various demons, he favors succubi and skurchurs, both of which he sends to tempt and corrupt politicians, leaders, heroes, and priests who he has taken an interest in.

Fraz-Urb'luu spent much of his time in the ancient past pursuing a corrupt sect of rakshasas, promising them power and glory if they would only shift their allegiances to him. He met with a moderate amount of success with this program, and even today large numbers of rakshasas serve the Prince of Deception. Many of these rakshasas have been corrupted by their master's whispers and are now chaotic evil, and most possess levels of sorcerer. These rakshasas are known collectively as the Hollow Rajahs, and they see to the rulership and government (such as it is) of the various regions in Hollow's Heart. A Hollow Rajah is difficult to mistake for a standard rakshasa, since each of these corrupted rakshasas have different heads and related animal themes—none of them adhere to the typical tiger theme common to most rakshasas.

During Fraz-Urb'luu's long imprisonment, many of the Hollow Rajahs perished in the resulting chaos, but some of them survived by fleeing to other planes. Eventually, these survivors drifted back to the Abyss and rebuilt small strongholds on the abandoned layer. They were each able to form small sections of terrain to lord over in Fraz-Urb'luu's absence, and when he returned to his throne in Zoragmelok those rakshasa who offered their lands to him were rewarded by being allowed to remain the rulers of those domains (under Fraz-Urb'luu, of course). Those who resisted were annihilated and their realms given over to whatever other minion Fraz-Urb'luu deemed fit for the responsibility. It's possible that a few Hollow Rajahs still exist on other planes (including the Material Plane) where they serve Fraz-Urb'luu as envoys and spies.

Skurchur

Small Outsider (Chaotic, Evil, Tanar'ri)
Hit Dice: 6d8+12 (39 hp)
Initiative: +5
Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares)
Armor Class: 20 (+1 size, +5 Dex, +4 natural), touch 16, flat-footed 15
Base Attack/Grapple: +6/+4
Attack: Tail +12 melee (1d6+2)
Full Attack: Tail +12 melee (1d6+2) and 2 claws +7 melee (1d4+1) and bite +7 melee (1d6+1)
Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft. (15 ft. with tail)
Special Attacks: Spell-like abilities, *summon tanar'ri*, touch of vacant beauty
Special Qualities: Damage reduction 5/cold iron or magic, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to electricity and poison, resistance to acid 10, cold 10, and fire 10, spell resistance 15, telepathy 200 ft.
Saves: Fort +7, Ref +10, Will +9
Abilities: Str 15, Dex 20, Con 14, Int 15, Wis 19, Cha 18
Skills: Bluff +13, Concentration +11, Diplomacy +19, Disguise +13 (+15 acting), Forgery +11, Gather Information +15, Intimidate +15, Knowledge (local) +11, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +11, Sense Motive +13
Feats: Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse
Environment: Infinite Layers of the Abyss
Organization: Solitary
Challenge Rating: 5
Treasure: Standard
Alignment: Always chaotic evil
Advancement: 7–12 HD (Small)
Level Adjustment: +5

This creature is twisted and deformed. Its body looks somewhat like that of a plucked and wingless vulture, but its short legs appear humanoid, as do its arms that end in large bird-like talons. It has a long neck like a vulture, yet its head more closely resembles an eel's with overly long jaws filled with translucent needlelike teeth. Although it stands just over three feet in height, its thin tail is outlandishly long, reaching nearly sixteen feet in length and resembling a knotted coil of twisted hair threaded with tiny barbs and cruel hooks.

These wretched-looking demons are rather disgusting in their true forms, yet they are masters of lies and deception, and prefer to operate in the form of an immaculately dressed and well-mannered halfling or gnome. They delight in the role of advisor, and take special pleasure in deluding an otherwise kind and benevolent leader into accepting them in this role. The whispered advice a skurchur gives to its false allies are intended to seem helpful and wise on the surface, yet when acted upon spread misery, pain, and horror. Just as a succubus tempts mortals with sins of the flesh, the skurchur tempts mortals with sins of the mind.

A skurchur is 3 feet tall in its natural form and weighs about 45 pounds.

Combat

A skurchur typically enters combat in an assumed humanoid form, in which it wields weapons it can utilize with its Weapon Finesse feat; they favor daggers, rapiers, and stilettos (use the stats for a punching dagger for a stiletto). Once combat starts in earnest, though, a skurchur always reverts to its true form to finish the fight, since its natural weaponry is so much more potent. Its tail gives it extraordinary reach for a creature of its size. Against relatively weak foes, it focuses all its physical attacks on one foe at a time. If confronted with obviously superior foes, the skurchur uses its *greater teleport* spell-like ability to gain a range advantage and then uses its spell-like abilities to try to sow dissent amongst its foes, focusing such attacks on any victims it has already affected with its touch of vacant beauty.

Spell-like Abilities (Sp): At will—*alter self* (humanoid forms only), *charm person* (DC 15), *command* (DC 15), *detect good*, *detect thoughts* (DC 16), *greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only), *hold person* (DC 16), *invisibility*, *tongues*. 3/day—*lesser geas* (DC 18), *suggestion* (DC 17). Caster level 8th. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

Summon Tanar'ri (Sp): Once per day, a skurchur can attempt to summon 1 succubus with a 30% chance of success. This ability is the equivalent of a 3rd-level spell.

Touch of Vacant Beauty (Su): One of a skurchurs most insidious abilities is its power to enhance the beauty of any creature it touches, but only by drawing out and consuming the target's willpower and intuition. Skurchur's are fond of using this ability to bribe or pay those they favor.

In order to use the touch of vacant beauty, a skurchur must take a full-round action while maintaining physical contact with its victim, who must either be willing or helpless. Each round the contact persists, the victim

Fraz-Urb'luu in the Real World

Unlike Demogorgon, Orcus, and Pazuzu, Fraz-Urb'luu has no corresponding real-world inspiration, apart from the standard belief that demons took pleasure in decieving mortals and tricking them into commiting sinful acts. Fraz-Urb'luu was created, whole-cloth, for DUNGEONS & DRAGONS. His first major public appearance was in the new monster supplement that came with module S4: The *Lost Caverns of Tsojcanth*, released in 1982. Yet even then, he had already earned a reputation for ruining player characters.

In the original Greyhawk campaign run by Gary Gygax and Robert Kuntz, a fighter/magic-user known as Erac's Cousin (played by Ernie Gygax) had acquired a pair of *vorpal swords*. His penchant for using both at the same time in combat was causing problems. Erac's Cousin and his boon companion Ayelerach (played by Mark Ratner) eventually stumbled upon Fraz-Urb'luu's prison in the dungeons below Castle Greyhawk and actually managed to free the demon prince. In a panic, Erac's Cousin used a scroll of *gate* and actually managed to attract Zeus' attention. Unfortunately, a die roll of 5% ensued and Zeus decided to ignore the situation. The two hapless adventurers were then whisked away by the Prince of Deception to his Abyssal lair, whereupon the demon prince destroyed Erac's Cousin's swords. Thus ended the double-bladed reign of Erac's Cousin. For a full recounting of these events, see Up on a Soapbox in *DRAGON* #320.

takes 2d4 points of Wisdom damage and gains a +1 bonus to his Charisma. The skurchur can absorb as much Wisdom as it wants (or is allowed) from its victim, but the maximum bonus it can impart to the victim's Charisma score is equal to the skurchur's own Charisma modifier (usually +4). Wisdom damage persists until healed, but the Charisma bonus fades in 24 hours.

Fraz-Urb'luu's Realm

Fraz-Urb'luu's realm is known as Hollow's Heart. At one point, his realm filled the entire 176th layer of the Abyss, but since Fraz-Urb'luu's imprisonment the entire place reverted to a featureless plain of white dust under a black sky. Over the past 25 years since his release, though, Fraz-Urb'luu has made great strides toward rebuilding Hollow's Heart. Today, the region is massive by any account, equaling the size of most major continents on Material Plane worlds. Yet still, this is a tiny pinpoint of what was once the playground of the Prince of Deception.

The accompanying map (see page 38) depicts the current configuration of Hollow's Heart. Without his staff, Fraz-Urb'luu cannot idly reconfigure the shape of his realm, and the process of adding and forming new terrain and realms from the surrounding wasteland is long and exhausting for the demon prince. Since each Abyssal layer is effectively infinite, Fraz-Urb'luu will never completely rebuild his realm. At least, not until he regains his staff.

Currently, Fraz-Urb'luu's minions, including several of the Hollow Rajahs, rule many of these regions but a few (such as the Demon's Teeth and the Blood Dunes) are little more than wildernesses. Fraz-Urb'luu might have created these realms, but not even he knows for sure what sinister creatures have moved in to make their homes. The skies above Hollow's Heart remain black, like a starless night sky. Nevertheless, the landscape itself remains brightly lit, as if by an invisible noontime sun. This supernatural light casts no shadows, which gives the realm a strange, almost two-dimensional feeling.

A brief description of the major sites of interest on Hollow's Heart follows.

Athawyn: After the city of Zoragmelok, the streets of Athawyn are perhaps the most decadent and debased of Hollow's Heart. The succubi and skurchurs who rule this city of 9,000 fiendish orcs and half-orcs use a large number of human slaves deemed unfit for the Red Rapture to tend to their vile needs as necessary. Visitors to Athawyn, more often than not, are either captured and eaten by the orcs or enslaved by the succubi and skurchur lords of the city. The city itself consists of a dizzying tangle of curving towers and looming domes made of red marble. Nyrashlia, a succubus bard 17, is the most powerful creature in the city, and for the last decade her word has been the primary influence on Athawyn's growth. Athawyn is the only city of Hollow's Heart not ruled by one of the Hollow Rajahs, but the corrupted rakshasas seem content with this, especially since they often visit the city for its more carnal offerings.

The Blood Dunes: This vast desert of blood-red particles is known for its withering climate; temperatures here are never below severe heat, and often reach levels of extreme heat (see heat dangers on page 303 of the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide*). Close inspection of the sticky red particles that make up the "sands" of this desert reveals them to be crumbling scabs and clots of dried blood. The Blood Dunes are infested with all manner of undead, and many powerful mummies and liches lurk in the mysterious ruins that are partially buried in these massive, morbid dunes.

Bonepus: Of all the settlements in Hollow's Heart, Bonepus is the most wretched. This small town of 1,560 fiendish goblins is ruled by Rontakus, a crocodile-headed Hollow Rajah rakshasa sorcerer 6 who treats Bonepus as his own personal dining table. The goblins are only barely able to keep up with Rontakus' appetite with their own fecundity. The buildings of this dripping, soggy town are made of rotting wood and strips of poorly preserved skin and leather stretched over frames made of twisted sticks harvested from nearby Scarwood.

Deathroot Woods: Spread throughout the lowlands and foothills that abut the Demon's Teeth, Deathroot Woods consist of a forest of twisted, diseased trees, primarily Abyssal variants of oak and pine. What looks like countless

bones litter the forest floor here, but close inspection reveals these to be the wretched roots of the trees. Numerous tainted plant monsters lurk in these woods, and rumors hold that a circle of thirteen 21-HD half-fiend treants rules the verdant corruption.

The Demon's Teeth: Nearly a third of Hollow's Heart consists of a sprawling reach of twisted, unsettled mountains known as the Demon's Teeth. Fraz-Urb'luu created these mountains first when he returned to the Abyss, tearing the vast jagged peaks out of the ground in a rage that lasted for many years before he finally calmed enough to turn his attentions to less violent terrain. The rocks and faces of these mountains are razor sharp—an explorer in this region must take extra care to avoid numerous lacerations from these ever-present surfaces. Four large and deep lakes of turgid bile lurk in the depths of the Demon's Teeth. What manner of creatures dwell in these mountains and the terrible lakes of bile can only be guessed at, but it seems likely that those who have lost favor with the Prince of Deception have taken to hiding in this vast reach of wilderness.

The Drooling Jungle: A horrible steaming jungle of parasitic fleshy trees that constantly drool mucus and poison from the muttering mouths that stud their trunks make this region the most nauseating in all of Hollow's Heart. The "ground" here is strangely warm, soft, and rubbery, almost like a massive sheet of senseless flesh covered with thick black hairs that double as undergrowth. All manner of fiendish monsters dwell here, including massive basilisks, strange hydras with the ability to spew acid, and legions of bar-lgura demons (*Book of Vile Darkness*, page 170) that hoot and gibber in the branches above. A gigantic, 30-HD nalfeshnee known only as the Gardener is thought to dwell somewhere in this region.

The Flensers: This jagged range of volcanoes constantly belches burning ash and lava into the black skies above Hollow's Heart. The surrounding mountains have strange, canted slopes, almost as if they are perched like rows of enormous razor blades ready to strip the flesh of anything that comes too close.

The Forever Gash: This long strip of land consists of the raw material of Hollow's Heart, a sheet of fine white powder. For reasons unclear even to Fraz-Urb'luu, this particular stripe of land resists his attempts to transform and shape. And so it runs through the Demon's Teeth, a strange incongruity to the tortured lands that surround it.

Harrowfen: This murky swampland abuts the tainted, thick waters of the Hollow Sea. As the waters wash into these lowlands and pool, they concentrate the sea's poisons to an incredible degree. Creatures in contact with the waters of Harrowfen must make a DC 15 Fortitude save each round or take 1d4 points of Constitution damage from the poisonous liquids. A creature that ingests this liquid takes a –5 penalty on his Fortitude save. The only creatures that live here are those who are immune to the poisons; naturally, demons thrive in this environment. Hezrous and skulvyn (*Fiend Folio*, page 54) are particularly common here.

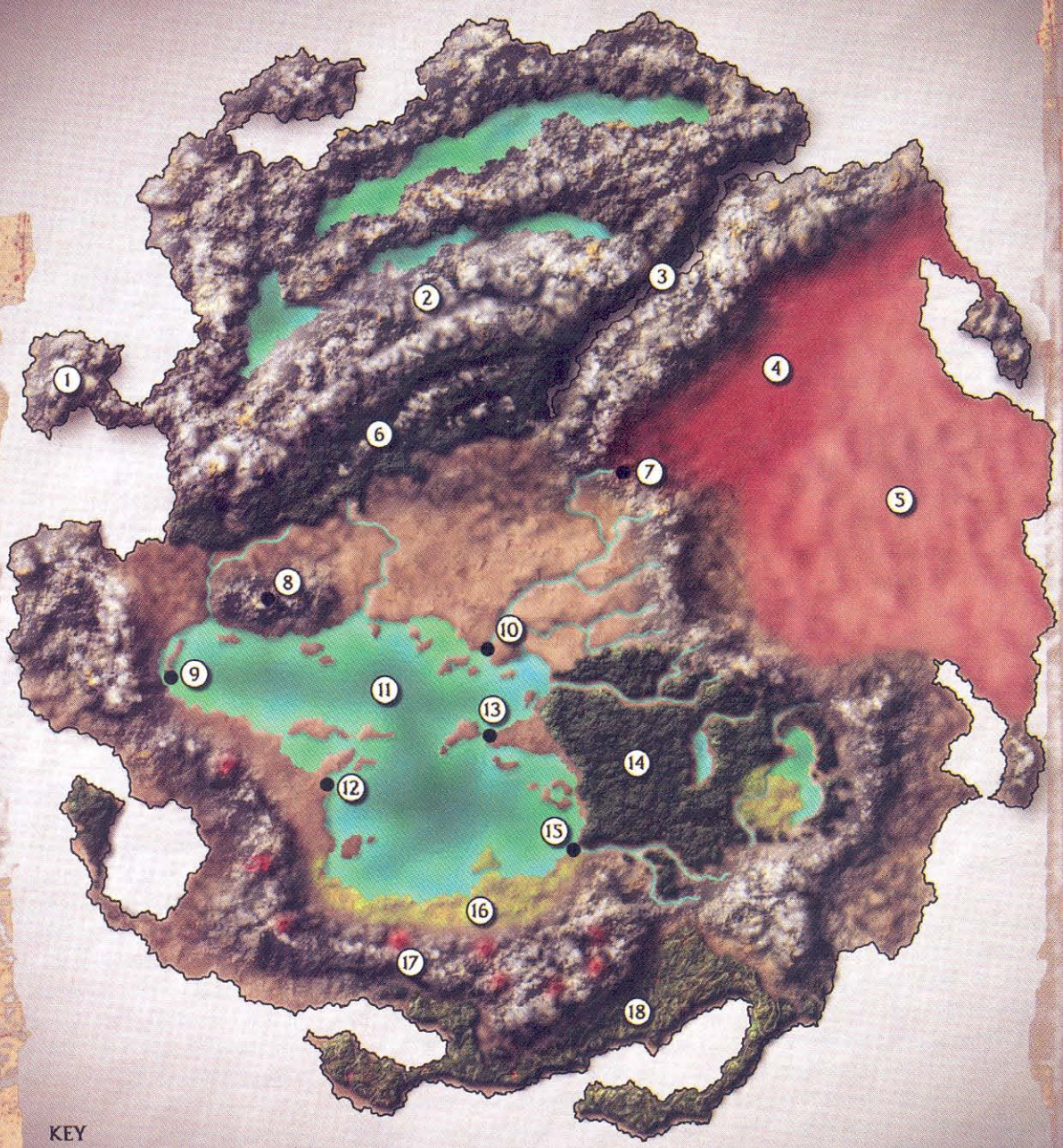
The Hollow Sea: This sizable ocean of foul, tainted water serves as a natural focus for the "civilized" portion of Hollow's Heart. The waters themselves look a little too green and smell a little too rancid to be easily mistaken for water. Anyone who drinks the waters of the Hollow Sea must make a DC 12 Fortitude save or take 1d2 points of initial and secondary Constitution damage. The Hollow Sea is for all intents and purposes bottomless. A determined swimmer could, in theory, swim all the way down to emerge into the 177th layer of the Abyss below. Numerous islands dot the surface of the Hollow Sea; these islands are rife with transient portals from other planes that often deposit unfortunate travelers, explorers, and adventurers on toxic shores. The denizens of Uanthur and Magghat often raid these islands for slaves or food. The waters of the Hollow Sea themselves are infested with half-fiend sharks and other horrors, including at least one myrmyxicus demon (*Fiend Folio*, page 52).

Karantis: This city is the focus of Fraz-Urb'luu's cult. In many ways, the place is a single massive temple of iron and porphyry built atop a sprawling mesa that overlooks the Hollow Sea. Approximately 6,300 half-elves, dwarves, halflings, gnomes, and half-orcs dwell here now, all serving under the gorilla-headed Hollow Rajah Kiltikairit, a rakshasa cleric 7/mystic theurge 6.

Karugoza: The raven-headed Hollow Rajah Liorkian, a rakshasa eldritch knight 10, rules the small city of Karugoza. This city has a population of 7,500, mostly orcs, ogres, and fiendish gnomes. Karugoza's primary purpose is to process the legions of humans Fraz-Urb'luu's minions capture. A fair amount of these humans are harvested from the islands of the Hollow Sea, but most are stolen from their homes across the Material Plane by demons and cultists who seek to gain Fraz-Urb'luu's favor. A healthy human typically brings a bounty of 100 gp (often paid in credit for the flesh pits of Athawyn). Sickly humans are sold at greatly reduced prices to anyone who can afford them; many end up being shipped to Athawyn to serve as slaves or food.

Magghat: The large town of Magghat is the sister city of Uanthur. Magghat has a population of about 3,200 orcs and ogres, many of which are sailors who spend weeks at a time plying the Hollow Sea in search of slaves. Magghat is ruled by the boar-headed Hollow Rajah Zurathani, a rakshasa sorcerer 3/loremaster 6. Zurathani considers himself an artist, and delights particularly in using magic to blend the flesh of living subjects together before using *flesh to stone* to create truly horrific statues for the city streets.

The Red Rapture: This vast stretch of plains serves as a massive killing ground for the humans captured by Fraz-Urb'luu's agents. All manner of torture devices can be found sprawled across this vast plain, and the ground is a stinking morass of bloody mud. Vrocks are the primary torturers and executioners here.


HOLLOW'S HEART
The Realm of Fraz-Urb'luu
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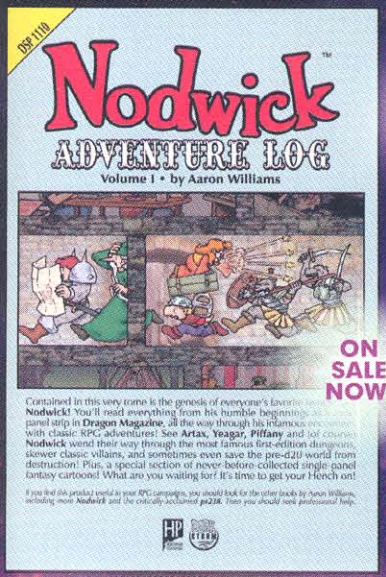
KEY
1 The Spiral of Ugudenk
2 The Demon's Teeth
3 The Forever Gash
4 The Red Rapture
5 The Blood Dunes
6 The Deathroot Woods
7 Karugoza
8 Karantis
9 Magghat
10 Zoragmelok
11 The Hollow Sea
12 Uanthur
13 Athawyn
14 The Scarwood
15 Bonepus
16 The Harrowfen
17 The Flensers
18 The Drooling Jungle
MILES
0
500
1000
WEST

Scarwood: This vast woodland serves Fraz-Urb'luu as a hunting ground. He often seeds this woodland with the scar-covered survivors of the walls that surround Zoragmelok, allowing several years to pass for the humans to build feral, savage societies throughout the vast woodlands. He keeps the woods fairly free of dangerous predators and demons as a result, to give his stock a chance to flourish.

The Spiral of Ugudenk: One of Fraz-Urb'luu's greatest enemies of his pre-imprisonment times was Ugudenk, the demon lord of worms and hungry parasites. Ugudenk often burrowed into Hollow's Heart, and each time Fraz-Urb'luu was forced to expend time and resources to track down and drive off the tenacious pest-lord. When he returned to Hollow's Heart after his imprisonment, Fraz-Urb'luu discovered that Ugudenk had claimed a portion of the layer as his own, and had infested it with his writhing minions. At the center of this region is a huge spiraling cavern that winds down from the surface all the way to the 177th layer of the Abyss. Fraz-Urb'luu tried to destroy the spiraling caverns but found he was unable to do so on three different attempts. Ugudenk seems content to lurk in this region, and seems to have no desire to expand his territory, so for now Fraz-Urb'luu suffers his presence.

Uanthur: See the entry for Maghat for details on this large town of 3,000 orcs and ogres. This city is ruled by the wolf-headed Hollow Rajah Proaliak, a rakshasa sorcerer 11 who takes great delight in eating still-beating hearts before the dying eyes of his dinner plate.

Zoragmelok: The mightiest city in all of Hollow's Heart, Zoragmelok is Fraz-Urb'luu's own lair and fortress. The city itself is massive, circular in shape, and surrounded by adamantine walls covered with razors and hooks from which dangle countless human bodies. These bodies are kept alive by a small army of harpy clerics who flap from body to body, applying healing, food, and water as necessary to keep the moaning victims on just this side of life. Inside, the city is an awesome display of impossible architecture. Corkscrew towers loom above twisted domes and vast amphitheaters. Yet despite its impressive skyline, the city is nearly empty. The only denizens of this enormous metropolis are Fraz-Urb'luu, his consorts, and the deceived—humans sacrificed to the Prince of Deception by his cult. Each of the deceived dwells alone in a section of city that has been changed to resemble what that particular person expects his afterlife to look like. Illusory neighbors, friends, and family populate these areas. Eventually, Fraz-Urb'luu strips these illusions away to gloat in the despair such a revelation engenders in the victim. The demon prince himself dwells in a massive fortress at the city's center, a behemoth structure that constantly changes and reforms its layout to suit its master's whim. Dozens of succubi consorts prowl the halls of Zoragmelok, most of which are also high-level bards, sorcerers, or clerics.



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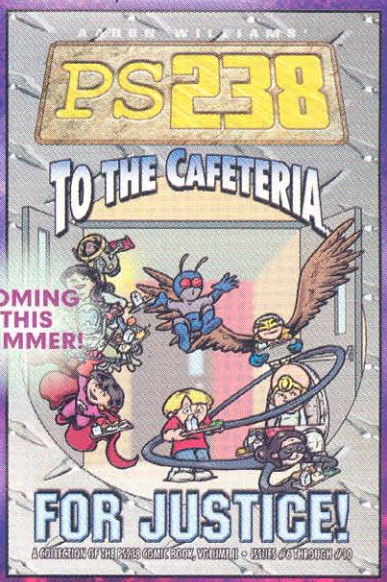


COMING THIS SUMMER!

by Keith Baker • illustrated by Steve Ellis

Noble Born

The Right to Rule

"See, what a grace was seated on this brow;
Hyperion's curls; the front of Jove himself;
An eye like Mars, to threaten and command;
A station like the herald Mercury
New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill;
A combination and a form indeed,
Where every god did seem to set his seal,
To give the world assurance of a man..."

—Hamlet
William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*

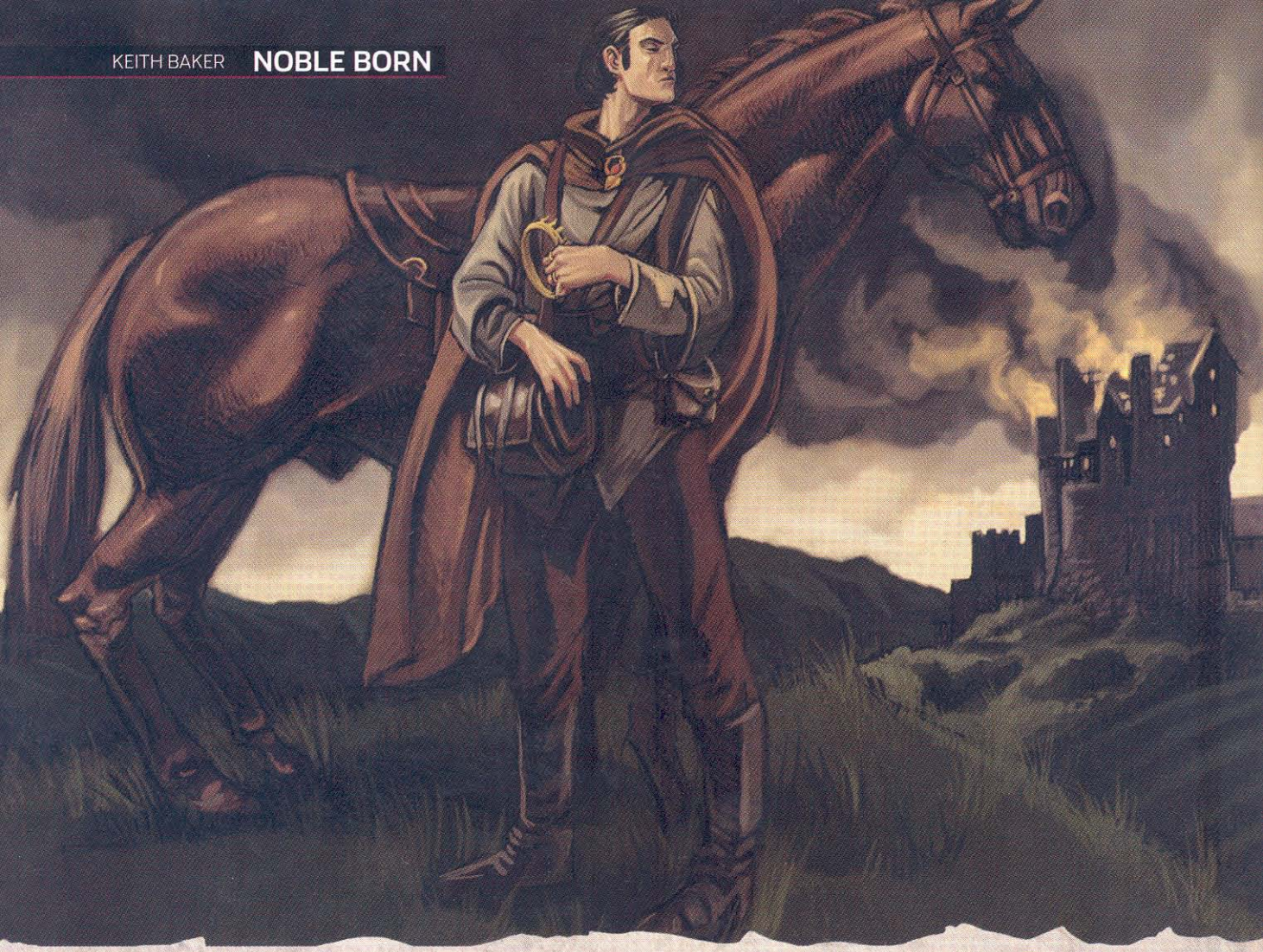
Who doesn't want to be king? From tales and myths of Beowulf, King Arthur, and Odysseus, to characters like Aragorn, Elric, and Kull, it does seem good to be in charge. Yet in D&D, lordship and the duties that go along with it often seem little more than a dull end to an exciting career of slaying monsters.

However, a lord can be a hero without a throne or even a title. In some variations of the legend, Robin Hood is a nobleman wrongly robbed of his lands; *The Lord of the Rings* revolves around Aragorn, last heir of a noble house; Michael Moorcock tells tales of Elric, an emperor whose kingdom lies in ruins, and George R.R. Martin's Song of Ice and Fire series brims with lords, ladies, and aspiring kings.

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS allows you to replicate your favorite fantasy novels and movies, but it is always characters who drive those stories. Adding history and background to your character provides the DM with a clear idea of what you want to get from a game and gives her story hooks to use in developing future adventures. Among the countless possibilities for character backgrounds, perhaps the most epic and dynamic is the role of the noble adventurer. From an aristocrat with loose ties to the throne to royal heirs opposed to the actual process of ruling a nation or fiefdom, the possibilities and motivations of the noble born are rife with unique role-playing opportunities.

Royal Themes

Aragorn, Elric, and King Arthur share the bond of nobility, but their stories have little in common. Does a crown lie in your character's future, or is he a fugitive driven from his throne? Is he a charismatic rebel or a wandering dandy? How does this tie in with the rest of the party? Some of the



best stories come from parties with linked backgrounds. If your ranger is a wandering prince robbed of his birthright, what about your friend's cleric? Does every character have a tie to the throne, or have you been brought together by the tides of fate? Consider the following ideas, and see if any suit your campaign.

Right to Rule

"By this axe I rule!"

—King Kull
Robert E. Howard, "By This Axe I Rule"

Your character's family holds a position of power and authority but he cannot simply inherit this office. He must prove his worth through action: through a life of adventure. Together with the DM you must set down tasks your character must accomplish to claim his birthright. Does he expect to accomplish his goal over the course of the campaign, or could this quest take years or even decades to complete? A few possibilities might include:

- Slay the Great Wyrm Dragotha and return the treasures he hoarded to their rightful owners.
- Drive the Redfist Hobgoblins from the Northern Marches.
- Find the answer to a cryptic riddle or fulfill an ancient prophecy.
- Seek out the *Sword of Kas* and return it to its vault.
- Travel to the twelve greatest cities in the land and best a prince in each.
- Save the soul of an ancestor from the Abyss.
- Find the lost *Shield of Prator* and claim it as a symbol of your rule.
- Master the spell *wish*—reality itself should bend to the whims of a true king.

Your character cannot hope to defeat a great wyrm in single combat or cast a high-level spell (especially if he isn't a spellcaster) when he first begins his adventuring career. These quests are long-term goals, and what your character learns in the process proves just as important as the task itself. Once your character achieves his goal your game might shift to a more political campaign or continue as a series of adventures. By accomplishing this task your character proves his worthiness to rule. However, his parents might continue to hold the throne for decades to come.

This makes an excellent premise as the core motivation of a party. The royal heir must prove himself—but his parents have no intention of letting him go out into the world unprotected and alone. The cleric joins the young noble as his confessor and represents the interests of the church. The wizard serves as his tutor or a royal adviser. A fighter or paladin protects him as a bodyguard, instructor, or old sparring partner, while

the bard or rogue might be a clever courtier or a common scoundrel who has won the trust (or heart) of the heir. Although the heir's task motivates the group, each character plays an important role in the quest's success and inevitably the kingdom to come.

The Prince in Exile

...for it was great shame to all them to see such a boy to have a rule of so noble a realm as this land was.

—Sir Thomas Malory, *Le Morte D'Arthur*

Noble blood flows through your character's veins, but his rank has been stripped away. You and the DM must decide how this came to pass. Perhaps your character committed an unforgivable crime of passion—but even a judge cannot spill the blood of kings, no matter how terrible the offense. Maybe your character possesses a strong claim to the throne and his presence in the court threatens the current ruler. Perhaps he's a bastard whose existence humiliates the king.

Whatever the reason, as the campaign begins your character is in exile. Should he return to his homeland he faces imprisonment or death. Only fading memories and tattered pride remain of his royal lineage.

As an exile, your character must determine how he feels about his homeland. Is he filled with angst and remorse, dreaming of his eventual vindication and return? Did his experience destroy his love for his country? What does he do if he crosses paths with a relative or former servant, or if someone recognizes him? Do his allies know about his heritage? What if the party is hired to return to his homeland? Does he dare cross the border knowing that it could mean his death?

The exile is an easy character to fit into any standard party. Your character's class skills might reflect the training he received growing up in court or that he's learned on the road. Your character wanders because he no longer has a home, and adventure has a way of finding him.

The Last of the Line

"Here is the Sword that was Broken and is forged again!"

—Aragorn
J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Two Towers*

Your character's ancestors were kings, but their throne fell long before his birth. He possesses no memories of palaces or jewels, and honed his skills in the wild lands or the darkest shadows of the city. Your character carries the blood of heroes and the time draws near for him to reclaim his rightful destiny.

Unlike the prince in exile, your character is not a fugitive. His family has fallen from history and his claim is long forgotten. He might not even know his own past when the adventure begins. Consider the following questions: What destroyed the dynasty of your character's ancestors? Was the kingdom torn apart from within or conquered by an outside force? Does your character intend to rebuild the shattered kingdom, or is his royal blood simply an aspect of his past?

In an adventuring party, your character's heritage might play as much or as little a role in a campaign as you and your DM decide. Perhaps your character's skills and feats represent the talents of his bloodline, secrets only his royal family held. In the case of several classes, like monks, paladins, or sorcerers, your character's class abilities might also spawn from his royal blood, his powers being evidence of his birthright.

Looking to fiction, both Aragorn and Elric fit into this mold: Aragorn reclaimed the throne of his forefathers, while Elric was the one responsible for the destruction of his kingdom.

The Family Curse

"Show his eyes, and grieve his heart;
Come like shadows, so depart!"

—The Three Witches
William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*

From the frog prince to the sleeping princess, the idea of a noble line tainted by magic resonates throughout myth and folklore. Your character belongs to a noble house, but an ancestral curse cripples his family, and unless the curse is removed, it might bring an end to his line. Sterility, lycanthropy, senility, vampirism—any of these possibilities could cripple a royal dynasty. However the curse manifests, it proves far too powerful for a simple *remove curse* spell to overcome. As the youngest member of the family, your character's responsibilities are few, and thus he sets out to cleanse the stain from his house. Uncovering the nature and origin of the curse proves the first challenge. To break the enchantment, your character might have to defeat a powerful sorceress, destroy a major artifact, or find a way to appease an angry god. Perhaps the curse is the work of an enemy nation, which even now prepares its armies, planning to invade as soon as the affliction fully incapacitates your character's family.

When exploring this idea, you and your DM must decide the nature of your character's curse and its effects. The curse might come into effect at a certain age, and your character still has time to spare. This proves particularly necessary if the curse would prevent him from adventuring. If every member of your character's family turns to stone at the age of thirty and he's currently twenty-nine years old, that's a strong motivation to find a cure. It might be interesting to reveal the curse as it begins to work. If your DM allows players to start characters at advanced levels, you could begin play as a vampire or werewolf. While you might enjoy playing such a creature the curse might slowly destroy your character's mind or have some other horrible side effect if he doesn't find a cure within a year.

As with some other royal scenarios, this development easily unifies a party. While one person plays the cursed heir others serve as loyal allies or politically ambitious mercenaries.

The Prince, Then the Pauper

...Odysseus entered the house in the guise of a beggar, a wretched man and an old, leaning on his staff, and clothed on with sorry raiment.

—Homer, *The Odyssey*

While some nobles are driven from their thrones, your character left by choice. To his jaded eyes the daily affairs of the court seem tedious and he yearns for adventure—and now he's found it. Hiring a look-alike, illusionist, or doppelganger to take his place, your character has slipped out into the world. At long last he can experience the simple life away from his keepers and chores, although reality might not fulfill the romantic ideal he had in mind!

While some disenfranchised nobles brim with angst, mourning the memories of a lost homeland, your character bursts with energy and curiosity. At last he might test his sword in true battle, mingle with the common folk, and drink until he collapses in a pool of his own vomit! Of course, the longer he stays out in the world, the more he might come to miss his luxuries and servants. Does he still have the option of going home? Your character might find that the imposter intends to hold onto her new position, and already moves to discredit him and ensure that he cannot return. What started as a joyride might become a deadly journey into exile.

While your character could come from any class, this scenario proves well suited to those with a knack for deception. The members of the party could include one or two friends from court, but the disguised noble probably doesn't bring a full entourage on his secret adventure. Instead, he's probably gone looking for exotic adventurers, the sort heard of in songs and stories. A noble character might reveal his true identity to his comrades only once they earn his trust. Even if he does, they might only help him with the expectation of a royal reward in the future.

Things need not be so dire and grim, however. Perhaps the noble can return to his house whenever he chooses. Depending on the arrangement with the imposter who has taken the character's position at court, this could easily shift into a Prince in Exile or Against the Usurper scenario.

Against the Usurper

"Farewell, friend. I was a thousand times more evil than thou."

—Stormbringer
Michael Moorcock, *Stormbringer*

Most of these ideas assume that your character is not actively ruling a domain. However, there is a darker possibility—that he has been per-

New Feat

The blood of royalty might serve as more than just a unique background and reason to adventure. Players who wish to further root their characters in a noble lineage might do so with the following feat.

Noble Born [General]

You are a scion of a noble house. You were raised to rule and learned the art of diplomacy as soon as you could talk.

Benefit: Diplomacy and Knowledge (nobility and royalty) are always considered class skills for you. In addition, if you gain the Leadership feat you receive a +2 to your Leadership score.

Special: This feat can only be taken at 1st level. It indicates a tie to a noble family, which might or might not still exist.

sonally driven from his lands by treachery or force, and that a despot now sits on the throne of his fathers.

This situation brings new possibilities to a campaign. First, your character's enemies search for him. The usurper seeks to eliminate all threats to his reign and, if discovered, soldiers and assassins quickly converge to do in your character. Second, your character possesses a clear and important goal: defeating the usurper and regaining his rightful position.

As you create your character, you and the DM must answer a key question: how did the usurpation come to pass? Was it an invasion by a neighboring nation, a treacherous coup by a power-hungry relative or regent, or maybe a stunt to get out of the castle gone awry? A critical issue of whether the people are on your character's side also arises, and even if they are, what dangers do they face in harboring him (or benefits would they gain by turning him in)? Is your character a hero in the style of Robin Hood, a champion of the common man against the machinations of a vile and vicious tyrant? Does merely one enemy hold your character's throne or is an entire family, corrupt caste, or monstrous conspiracy responsible?

Overthrowing a tyrant proves no small task, and an entire campaign could focus on doing just that. When your character starts at 1st level and the usurper is already at 20th level his noble blood does him little good. Thus, he must adventure to build his skills, find the magic items and artifacts to help him in his fight, and win the trust of powerful allies and the common folk.

As in other instances, a party could easily result from this idea. An entire group could consist of refugees from the court—trusted retainers who helped your character escape. These characters might come from different backgrounds only to be bound together by hatred of the usurper: the cleric of an outlawed religion, the rogue who almost had her hands cut off, the paladin who senses the evil in the tyrant's heart. It might take the course of the entire campaign to actually reclaim the character's title, but the theme can expand and hang over his adventures as new atrocities and abuses of power come to light.

King of the Hill

...there was no other in earth's domain;
under vault of heaven, more valiant found;
of warriors none more worthy to rule!

—Beowulf

Perhaps your character is not an heir to the throne, but rather a simple knight or baronet, lord of a mere thorp or a patch of swamp. In this case, his duties as lord of the manor don't prevent him from living the life of an adventurer, yet they still play a factor. Suddenly he has something to defend. Servants and serfs might rely on him for protection and prosperity. What does he do when a terrible plague ravages his hamlet? When the ghost of an ancient murderer rises up and begins to terrorize the populace? If bandits seize the village in your character's absence, how does he find a way to drive them out with minimal loss of life? He clearly has the power to beat the bandits—but how many of his subjects would die in a direct confrontation?

As a landowner, it also falls to your character to administer justice on his lands and to pay fealty to those above him in the line of power. The king demands tribute, but what does your character do if a dragon wipes out his harvest? Does he seek to increase the size of his holdings, or is he content with his meager lot?

This concept makes a strong backbone for starting a campaign, with one character taking the role of the landowner and the other players creating her trusted allies and advisors. However, this plotline might also unfold over the course of an ongoing campaign. A grateful ruler could grant a fiefdom as a reward—but is it really a reward, or is your character being thrown into a hornet's nest? A king might place a capable PC in charge of a particularly dangerous or rebellious region, trusting him to find a way to quell the orc uprising or lift the curse that blights the crops.

Class and Systems of Government

When working nobility into your campaign, take a moment to consider the cultures of the world and the source of your character's claim. The feudal monarchy is a staple of the fantasy genre, but many other intriguing options exist. Did your character inherit his throne or was he chosen to rule? Perhaps a prophecy foretold his birth and rise to power, with one in every generation bearing the mark of the king that shapes your character's destiny.

You should also consider character's class and how it might reflect the government of his homeland and his current situation. Some examples might include the following:

- Among barbarians, blood often proves the key factor in leadership, but this might mean either sharing the blood of the last king or spilling it in battle. A barbarian makes a good match for the Right to Rule scenario, as he must prove his strength and

skill. In an Against the Usurper campaign your character must fight a traitor to regain control of his tribe, while as King of the Hill he is the lone defender standing between his people and destruction.

- A paladin or cleric could find a home as the servant of a powerful theocracy. In the case of Right to Rule, your character might be charged to prove his devotion to the gods or find a sign of their favor. On the other hand, his divine calling could draw him away from the throne. As a paladin, the Prince, then the Pauper scenario might not require frivolous desires. Instead, perhaps your character left the palace to follow the call of the gods, which those around him do not understand. As Last of the Line, it's not your character's bloodline at stake—rather, he is the first in centuries to bear the blessings of the gods and truly have the divine right to rule.

In creating your character, you need to decide whether his special abilities reflect his noble heritage or whether your character's develops these talents on his own. If your character is a sorcerer, do the other members of his family also possess this gift? Is his mystical power proof of his nobility and right to rule or does he alone possess these supernatural abilities? The answer might serve as the reason he found himself driven from the throne.

The Impact of Nobility

So the blood of kings runs through your character's veins. So what? Does this have any actual effect on him?

Consider your character's skills and feats. How do they reflect the nature of his nation? The Noble Born feat (see the New Feat sidebar on the previous page) provides one way to represent a genteel birth. While this might prove appropriate for many feudal nations, the chieftain of a brutal barbarian tribe should be familiar with more violent arts, taking Power Attack or Skill Focus (Intimidate). Consider the values of your character's culture and how his abilities reflect his history.

Another concern is the level of recognition and duty your character bears on his shoulders. Do his loyal subjects recognize his face? What do they expect from him? Will others call upon him to administer justice or to defend the innocent? Needless to say, this should depend on where an adventure takes place. If your character is a benevolent lord, he might automatically receive a positive reaction from locals but with the expectation that he carry out the duties of his position—failure to do so could result in humiliation and loss of rank. In foreign lands, others might view your character with suspicion and hostility, wondering what motives bring him to their lands.

Finally, consider the presence of family heirlooms. In most of the scenarios presented in this article, your character has no access to whatever wealth your family might possess. If your character starts the game at 1st level, it might make sense to begin with superior equipment—a masterwork chain shirt and a fine sword. This will require the DM to adjust the game so as to not give your character undue benefits over other characters. As such, perhaps the DM chooses to emphasize your character's duties, giving him a fine suit of armor, but causing commoners to constantly call on him for assistance. Perhaps your character's employers refuse to pay him for services, because as a lord of the land it is his duty to protect the people. He might also face thieves or kidnappers who see his royal trappings as a promise of wealth. Another possibility is that your character possesses a powerful heirloom item that he cannot use. To use a well-known example, your character's magic sword lies in pieces—nothing more than worthless metal until it is reforged. Your character promises to reclaim this symbol of his house when he seizes his true destiny, but for now it's just a plot point.

With that said, a powerful heirloom might stir up a campaign. King Arthur wasn't even a knight when he drew Excalibur from the stone. Possessing a valuable item might prove far more dangerous than helpful, since more powerful people might try to seize it. However, if the DM does take this path, she should consider minor bonuses for other characters as well, or balance out these starting gifts with treasures in future adventures.

These suggestions should serve as mere starting points. Should your character ever claim a throne or seek to rule a kingdom, your game might shift to an entirely new style of campaign where cunning ambassadors prove far more dangerous than dragons and demons. The adventuring prince and the exile without a country are classic literary heroes, and adding these archetypes to your campaign can add many roleplaying opportunities to your character's adventures.

by George Swan • illustrated by Eric Deschamps and Jonathan Wayshak

THE RELICS OF FAERÛN

GIFTS FROM THE GODS

During the Time of Troubles, faiths were tested and convictions renewed. In the wake of those dark times, the deities rewarded the true believers who unerringly served them. Many of the gifts bestowed upon the faithful were relics, items empowered by a connection to a deity's divine energy. The following collection presents merely a handful of the relics that have appeared since the Time of Troubles, which supplement those found in Chapter 3 of the *Book of Exalted Deeds* and Chapter 4 of *Complete Divine.*

BANE: ROD OF CLENCHED FISTS

This hefty rod is crowned by four clenched fists stacked on top of one another. It looks to be made of coal, but it bears the unmistakable coldness of metal when wielded. Fzoul Chembryl gave many of these rods—as well as the secret of their creation—to followers of Bane who kept the faith during the god's "absence." Forging such a rod requires finding three good-aligned humanoids willing to sacrifice their fists to the rod with full knowledge of its use. Duress is often necessary to force such capitulation. For the capstone to the rod, a greater sacrifice is required—the creator's own fist. The original bearers of the *rods of clenchec fists* have since moved into positions of power in the governments of Faerûn, either directly or covertly.

The *rod of clenched fists* strikes as a *+2 light mace* and utilizes the following spell-like abilities as a 9th-level caster. Only one of these abilities can be used in a round.

- *Bane* at will as per the spell. A DC 11 Will save resists this effect.
- *Vampiric touch* 3/day as per the spell. This ability can be activated on a successful attack as a free action, dealing an additional 4d6 points of damage and healing the wielder by the same amount.
- Once per day, the rod can be used to cast *dominate person* on a creature touched. A DC 17 Will save resists this effect. Each day that the dominated creature is touched by the rod extends the duration of the domination by one day without a new saving throw. Touching a dominated creature in this manner uses the *dominate person* ability of the rod for that day.

To use this relic, you must worship Bane and either sacrifice a 5th-level divine spell slot or have the True Believer feat and at least 9 Hit Dice.

Moderate enchantment; CL 9th; Craft Rod, Sanctify Relic, *bane, dominate person, vampiric touch,* creator must worship Bane and sever a hand to power the rod (which cannot be regenerated unless the rod is destroyed); Price 42,500; Weight 5 lb.

GOND: POUCH OF BLACK ESSENCE

When Gond came to Lantan during the Time of Troubles, he unveiled the secrets of that most powerful and dangerous of materials known as *smokepowder*. The Wonderbringer knew that the gnomes there would not misuse the technology—but accidents would sometimes happen. In order to protect his treasured innovators in their studies of the technology, Gond crafted special pouches that contained an unlimited supply of the explosive black powder. Eventually, the gnomes of Lantan made copies of the pouches and spread them through their trusted channels to other bastions of invention across Faerûn.

The *pouch of black essence* is stained with Gond's holy symbol, as if the material was once a piece of cloth that bore the symbol before being wrapped up around its contents to form a container. No drawstring seals the pouch, but it is watertight and opens easily when a hand or finger probes inside. The bearer can bring forth 5 pounds (80 ounces) worth of *smokepowder* per tenday (1 ounce is needed for muskets, and at least 5 ounces are needed for a *smokepowder* bomb). *Smokepowder* created in this way must be used within 1 hour of being removed from the pouch, after which time the powder vanishes. Additionally, the bearer of the *pouch of black essence* gains resistance to fire 20, but only when a *smokepowder* explosion causes the damage.

TRUE BELIEVER [GENERAL]

Your deity rewards your unquestioning faith and dedication.

Prerequisites: Must choose a single deity to worship. Must be within one step of that god's alignment.

Benefit: Once per day when you are about to make a saving throw you may declare that you are using this feat to gain a +2 insight bonus on that saving throw.

This feat also allows you to use a relic.

This feat originally appeared in *Complete Divine.*

To use this relic, you must worship Gond and either sacrifice a 3rd-level divine spell slot or have the True Believer feat and at least 5 Hit Dice.

Moderate conjuration; CL 7th; Craft Wondrous Item, Sanctify Relic, *Leomund's secret chest, resist energy,* ability to create *smokepowder,* creator must worship Gond; Price 6,500; Weight 2 lb.

ILMATER: RIBBONS OF THE TWICE-MARTYRED

Daltrond Rica was considered one of the greatest healers in Sembia. When the Shaking Plague stretched like a deathveil over nearby Scardale, he journeyed there without thought of his safety. Daltrond followed the trail of rotting bodies, giving the blessing of the Broken God to both the dead and to survivors who had lost their loved ones to the disease.

By the time he reached the Sembian garrison in Scardale, the Ilmatari trembled with fevered chills. He had caught the Shaking Plague. Half of the garrison was dead, and the other half bedridden. Daltrond worked until he could stand no more, knowing that to cure himself might mean that one of his charges would die. His final breath was a prayer to Ilmater.

One of the soldiers saw the miracle. Daltrond's bloody ribbon accoutrements that bound his wrists and ankles expanded and wrapped around him like snakes, mummifying him instantly. Just as quickly, the ribbons faded and fell apart. Daltrond awoke, alive and free of the disease and its debilitating effects.

Still wanting to help others, the Ilmatari pressed farther into the infected lands and eventually once again fell ill with the plague that so many people had survived because of him. A shrine to the Broken God was built on the site where he at last succumbed to the disease.

These relics appear as ordinary ribbons that Ilmatari often adorn themselves with, until the Broken God has deemed the wearer worthy of his blessing (as determined by the DM). Many of these relics have revealed themselves to dying Ilmatari in recent years, through need or accident. The ribbons are wrapped loosely around the wrists and ankles (although bracers and boots can be worn under them without penalty). If the wearer dies suffering for the sake of others, the ribbons wrap around the body in 1 round, completely encasing it. The following round, the ribbons unwrap and the Ilmatari is completely healed, as per the spell *resurrection.* The normal loss of level penalty for dying still applies. Once the relic is used, it will not function for that same person again.

To use this relic, you must worship Ilmater and either sacrifice a 3th-level divine spell slot or have the True Believer feat and at least 5 Hit Dice.

Strong conjuration; CL 13th; Craft Wondrous Item, Sanctify Relic, *resurrection,* creator must worship Ilmater; Price 11,000; Weight 1 lb.

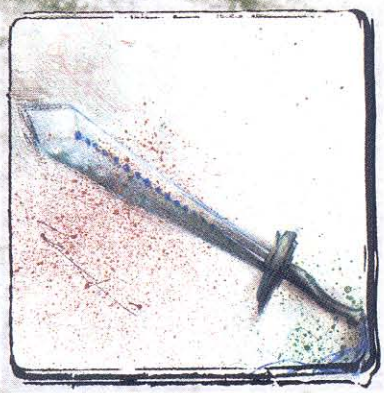
KELEMVOR: ASHEN STAFF OF INEVITABILITY

Kelemvor gave the knowledge of creating these smoke-colored staves of petrified wood shortly after the god understood his position as the Lord of the Dead. The sole purpose of these relics is to identify those without a patron deity (known as the Faithless) and "cleanse" them of their misunderstanding.

When the staff is within 20 feet of a Faithless, it begins to drone softly. If the relic ever strikes a Faithless, the power of the staff shows the target that his death is inevitable—and when it does occur he will writhe in agony, trapped in the Wall of the Faithless forever. The vision can be resisted with a successful DC 13 Will save. Failure means that the creature is stunned for 1d4 rounds while forced to confront his lack of a patron deity. Whether or not the creature undergoes an epiphany as a result of this forced introspection is up to the player of the stricken creature (or the DM). The power only works on intelligent, sentient creatures native to the Material Plane and capable of having a patron deity. Whether or not the save is successful, a creature cannot be affected again by this power for 24 hours. DMs should not automatically assume that creatures have no patron deity: they should consult the charts on pages 221–223 in *Faiths and Pantheons*. In all other ways, the *ashen staff of inevitability* strikes foes as a *+1 ghost touch/+1 ghost touch quarterstaff*.

To use this relic, you must worship Kelemvor and either sacrifice a 3rd-level divine spell slot or have the True Believer feat and at least 5 Hit Dice.

Moderate enchantment; CL 8th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Sanctify Relic, *augury, cause fear*; creator must worship Kelemvor; Price 16,600; Weight 10 lb; Cost 8,600 gp + 640 XP.



OGHMA: LEGENDMAKER

In recent years, fledgling Ohgmanyte bards, clerics, and others with wanderlust have carried a truly remarkable weapon—at least in the weapon's opinion. This weapon, called *legendmaker*, has a voice all its own and is not afraid to use it to form an opinion, a song, or an overly intricate plan. *Legendmaker* was forged by Ohgma himself (a fact that the weapon reinforces on occasion) and exists to experience and retell the epics surrounding the bearer and her companions. It is most likely found in the hands of an introvert, or someone unwilling or unable to tell of the tales of her life.

Legendmaker is a longsword and gives the bearer the Martial Weapon Proficiency (longsword) feat if she does not have it already. Its abilities depend on the character level of the bearer—as the legend of the bearer grows, so does the weapon's power. The relic's enhancement bonus depends on the character level of the wielder (+1 at 1st level, with an additional +1 for every four levels up to +5 at 16th level).

AL neutral; Int 19, Wis 10, Cha 19; Speech, telepathy, 120 ft. darkvision, blindsense, and hearing; Ego 24. *Legendmaker* has the following skills: Appraise +14, Perform (song) +14, and Spellcraft +14, as well as the bardic knowledge ability at +9. *Legendmaker* loves erudition and so gladly gives advice on any topic (although it tends to give much more information than is desired). As Oghma is the god of bards as well as knowledge, *legendmaker* can utilize bardic music as a 4th-level bard, however it must be held to use this ability and it ceases singing should it be used to attack. It can speak (but not read) Common, Dwarven, Elven, Gnome, and Halfling.

To use this relic, you must worship Oghma and either sacrifice a 4th-level divine spell slot or have the True Believer feat and at least 7 Hit Dice.

Strong enchantment; CL 20th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Sanctify Relic, *legend lore, miracle*; creator must worship Oghma; Price 124,115 gp; Weight 4 lb; Cost 62,215 gp + 4,952 XP.

SHAR: AMULET OF PERFECT NIGHT

After Shar killed Ibrandul and assumed his identity, she basked in the Underdark—a place where the cursed rays of daylight never touch. It reminded her of the primeval darkness that existed before the world began. In commemoration of the eternal blackness that exists in the deep places of Faerûn, she created the first of the *amulets of perfect night* over the body of the fallen god of the Underdark. The amulets are flat black metal disks surrounded by a shadowy amethyst ring and are often confused with a simple holy symbol of Shar (and can be used as such).

As a standard action, the relic may emit a shadowy illumination (as the *darkness* spell) in a 20-foot radius around the bearer of the amulet. This effect cannot be countered by *daylight* or similar spells, as it is tied directly

HAND OF TORM

Abjuration [see text]
Level: Clr 4, Pal 4
Components: V, S, DF
Casting Time: 1 minute
Range: 10 ft.
Area: 10-ft. radius emanation centered on you
Duration: 1 hour/level
Saving Throw: Fortitude negates
Spell Resistance: Yes

You create an immobile zone of warding that is permeable to those of your religion but repels all others. The warded area has a shimmering visible border, above which is a ghostly image of a giant hand (the appearance of the hand depends upon your patron, so Torm's clerics have a shining metal gauntlet, while those of Bane have a black clawed gauntlet and those of Malar have a great beast's claw).

Creatures that have the same patron as you, or are wearing a holy symbol of your patron, can enter and move within the warded area unhindered. Other creatures that try to enter or move within the area must make Fortitude saves or be stunned for 1 round. If a creature's only action is to try to move completely out of the area, the ward does not hinder it.

Clerics and paladins of deities other than Torm name this spell after their own deity—*hand of Ilmater*, for example. This spell has the alignment components of your patron, so if your patron is Torm, this is a lawful and good spell.

This spell originally appeared in *Magic of Faerûn*.

and continuously to the perpetual night of the Underdark (although it would be extinguished in an *antimagic field* or similar effect). The bearer of the relic gains darkvision out to 60 feet (if she does not already have it) and can see through magical *darkness* perfectly. Also, those within the area of *darkness* created by this relic take a –2 penalty on saves against Shadow Weave magic. Finally, the wielder can cause *blindness*, as per the spell, in any one target within 210 feet once per day as a standard action. A DC 13 Fortitude save resists this effect.

To use this relic, you must worship Shar and either sacrifice a 3rd-level spell slot or have the True Believer feat and at least 5 Hit Dice.

Strong evocation; CL 11th; Craft Wondrous Item, Sanctify Relic, *blindness/deafness, darkvision, deeper darkness*, creator must worship Shar, the item must be made in an unlit portion of the Underdark; Price 40,000 gp; Weight 2 lb.

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SUNE: RING OF FIREHAIR

During the Time of Troubles, Sune rescued Sharess, goddess of sensual fulfillment, from her darkly hedonistic passions and near subsumption by Shar. In their escape from the Dark Goddess' grasp, threads of Sune's hair fell to the Material Plane and formed into perfectly braided bands. While only five of these rings are currently known to exist, one or two more come into the possession of Sune's faithful every decade.

Wearing the goddess' ring gives the bearer a pronounced confidence in his interactions with others, granting a +2 sacred bonus to Charisma. Furthermore, others see this confidence, making initial NPC attitudes one level higher than they normally would be (making indifferent NPCs become friendly and so on). Note that this ability only affects the wearer of the *ring of fairhair*, and a creature or individual who might be only unfriendly to the ring's wearer might still be hostile toward other members of her group. Also, any hostile action taken by the Sunite breaks the power of the ring over the creatures or individual affected. Many would see an attack as the deepest of betrayals, and might pursue the Sunite above all others. This power cannot be turned off but does take 24 hours to take effect and remains with the wearer for 24 hours after taking off the ring.

To use this relic, you must worship Sune and either sacrifice a 4th-level divine spell slot or have the True Believer feat and at least 7 Hit Dice.

Moderate Enchantment; CL 7th; Forge Ring, Sanctify Relic, *calm emotions, eagle's splendor*, creator must worship Sune; Price 22,800; Weight 1 lb.

TEMPUS: THE WAR WIDOW

This curious relic is a battered warhammer with a haft partially covered by tattered black sackcloth. Recent legend has it that during the invasion of the Tuigan Horde, the battle-hardened clerics of the Order of the Steel Fang were being slowly eradicated by poison and other underhanded methods. They prayed to the Lord of Battles for a blessing that would protect them from unethical tactics, yet would still preserve the brutal fairness of war. Copies of this weapon appeared in their armories the next morning. Since then, the veteran warriors of Tempus have wielded the relic to make sure that they die gloriously in battle, and not from diseased rations or tripwires.

While carrying (but not necessarily wielding) *war widow*, it grants a +3 luck bonus on all saving throws made against disease, poison, and the effects of traps. The weapon otherwise functions as a +2 *anarchic warhammer*. The bearer must participate in a combat once a tenday or the relic ceases to function until the next combat (even the enhancement bonus fades). While it does not necessarily have to be a war in order for the combat to count, there must always be a chance of death. For example, gladiatorial battles count (even if they are voluntary), but butchering sheep does not.

To use this relic, you must worship Tempus and either sacrifice a 5th-level divine spell slot or have the True Believer feat and at least 9 Hit Dice.

Moderate conjuration; CL 9th; Craft Arms and Armor, Sanctify Relic, *align weapon, resistance*, creator must worship Tempus; Price 36,812; Weight 1 lb; Cost 18,562 gp + 1,460 XP.

TORM: TRUEWORD BUCKLER

One of the greatest sacrifices in the Time of Troubles took place in the harbor of Tantras. Torm the True, bolstered to towering size, killed Bane—only to die himself from the struggle. His sacrifice was coupled with those of thousands of faithful, who willingly gave their lives so that Torm could prevail. Since the True One was restored to life by the overgod Ao, these shields have appeared on the forearms of the Martyr's Progeny, a group of devout adolescents orphaned by the crisis in Tantras. To a follower of Torm, the True God, the item's material is immediately apparent: it is Torm's own skin. While the unenlightened sees only a leather clad buckler, a follower of Torm sees, burned into the flesh, the word "truth" written in ten different languages.

The relic acts as a *+4 darkwood buckler*, and grants the wearer two additional powers. Once per tenday, the wearer can *discern lies*, like the spell heightened to 5th level. A DC 17 Will save resists this effect. Additionally, the buckler can activate the spell *hand of Torm* (presented in *Magic of Faerûn*) once per day. A DC 16 Fortitude save resists this effect. Both effects are cast at 9th-level.

To use this relic, you must worship Torm and either sacrifice a 5th-level divine spell slot or have the True Believer feat and at least 9 Hit Dice. At the DM's discretion, the Hit Die restriction can be lowered if you are one of the Martyr's Progeny.

Strong abjuration; CL 13th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Sanctify Relic, *discern lies, hand of Torm*, creator must worship Torm; Price 27,415 gp; Weight 3 lb; Cost 13,815 gp + 1,088 XP.

by Eric Cagle
illustrated by Peter Bergting

THE ECOLOGY OF THE BEHIR

When most adventurers think of enormous, reptilian beasts, dragons immediately come to mind. However, dragons are not the only scaled giants to instigate fear, respect, and sheer awe with their mere presence. One such magical beast combines the voracity of an entire pack of starving predators with unchecked draconic deadliness: the behir.

Bestial yet canny predators, behirs prowl broken hills, wastelands, and barrens looking for food enough to fill their considerable gullets. With surprising cunning disguised by their monstrous appearance, behirs offer those expecting to face nothing more than a dumb beast only a slow and painful digestion.

HISTORY OF BEHIRS

Behirs exhibit numerous traits that suggest an unnatural genesis. The most common theory posits that some enormous, magically altered snake or lizard—possibly even a manifestation of the gods Merrshaulk or Apep—bred with a powerful blue dragon in a time long past. The offspring of this bizarre union lacked the intellect of their draconic parent but exhibited the lightning breath weapon, thick hide, and spiny crests. Over time, these aberrant dragon spawn managed to propagate their own species and broke from draconic society to take up lairs in the wilderness. Most dragons, especially blue dragons, completely deny such theories, seeing behirs as nothing more than abominations that should be destroyed whenever possible. However, a few dragons (typically metallics) confirm hints of truth in this possible genesis, although none admit the full story—if indeed any truly know.

An alternative theory suggests that it was in fact a blue dragon that created the first behirs. Seeking guardians akin to half-dragons, yet more powerful and easier to control, a draconic sorcerer began meddling with the blood of her own kind. Either by breeding with a magically summoned being or tampering with her own unhatched eggs, the blue dragon created a clutch of deadly yet dimwitted offspring.

Whether these feral sub-dragons turned on and cannibalized their mother or she grew disgusted with her unnatural brood and drove them from her lair remains unknown. Frequent observations, however, demonstrate that blue dragons revile and actively hunt behirs, while behirs fly into a rage at the merest mention of dragons of any color.

Regardless of tales of their draconic heritages, behirs prove physically (both internally and externally) very different from true dragons. As such, varying theories of their actual genesis prove far-flung and often radically conflicting.

PHYSIOLOGY OF THE BEHIR

While superficially resembling dragons, behirs are more akin to gigantic snakes than true wyrms. A full-grown behir reaches at least 40 feet in length and weighs approximately 4,000 pounds. Their extremely tough and scaly hides bristle with armored ridges and vary in color from electric blue to nearly purple with bands of brown . The underbellies of male behirs exhibit a lighter hue, typically a pale blue, while female underbellies near shades of white highlighted with streaks of azure. All behirs sprout numerous large horns that curve backwards from their heads and continue down their serpentine necks. Largely ornamental, these horns act as an indicator of the beast's age (growing for a behir's entire life) and are frequently used in preening hard-to-reach scales.

Behirs possess a dozen short but powerful legs capable of tucking up neatly along the sides of their bodies, allowing them to either slither along like a snake or gallop in an undulating stride. They prefer using their snake-like locomotion when traveling any

KNOWLEDGE OF BEHIRS

The following table shows the results of a Knowledge (arcana) check as it relates to behirs. Those who study magical beasts, as well as inhabitants of the dry, dusty barrens that these monstrosities call home, are most likely to possess this information.

Knowledge (arcana)

DC	Result
10	Behirs are wingless, twelve-legged, vaguely draconic beasts capable of blasting foes with their electrified breath.
15	Behirs territorially claim wide swaths of land and "rule" them from rocky spires and plateaus. Using their powerful jaws to snatch up prey, behirs either fatally constrict such prisoners or swallow them whole.
20	Behirs are intelligent yet brutish creatures capable of speaking Common and possessing egos as large as their monstrous bulks. A behir's multiple legs make it a masterful climber capable of scaling most any surface.
25	Behirs hate all dragons and blindly attack them on sight. The breath weapon of a behir takes a relatively long time to recharge once used, yet this innate affinity for electricity makes behirs immune to all electrical attacks.

considerable distance, as it makes moving across the broken landscapes they usually inhabit far easier. Behirs commonly only use their legs when climbing or feeding. Both because of their numerous legs and their comfort while slithering, it's impossible to trip or knock over behirs.

Overly large, a behir's mouth sports dozens of thin, needlelike teeth that curve inward for the purposes of grabbing meat and tearing it in large gobbets. A behir cannot chew food with any particular ease and spits out anything it cannot swallow entirety. The throat and stomach of a behir are equally oversized, capable of swallowing entire creatures whole. When filled, an incredibly powerful acid floods the behir's stomach that reduces flesh to a nutrient-rich chyme in a matter of minutes. The rare items a behir cannot digest (such as exceptionally resistant substances like adamantine) it regurgitates in a slow, awkward process within its lair.

A portion of the energy behirs generate from their food goes to fueling a number of strange, almost glassy organs that run below the thickly armored plates of their necks. Far different from the draconis fundamentum organ that produces the breath weapons of true dragons, these coarse formations are arrayed in a state of constant friction, shifting and colliding against one another as a behir moves. This constant friction gathers within several chambers inside the behir, waiting to escape in a bolt when the creature opens a specialized chamber within its mouth. Sometimes this energy escapes in ribbons that ripple over a behir's tongue or crackle over its spines, especially when the creature becomes agitated or otherwise excited. These formations require almost exactly 1 minute to generate enough friction to create a blast of electricity deadly enough for a behir to use as a weapon.

Not far from these charged structures rests a behir's brain. Large and complex enough to facilitate a behir's sentience and capacity for speech, this organ is in no way as complex or advanced as a dragon's brain. Also, perhaps due to the electrified organs nearby, behirs are prone to violent mood swings, far-flung leaps of reasoning, and spasmodic muscle actions.

Perhaps another effect of the electricity that at times seems uncontrolled within their bodies, behirs live fast and burn out quickly, rarely living beyond forty years. However, possibly as a result of some aberrant origin, a behir's maximum age varies extremely from one to the next, with some dying of old age in their thirties while others live well into their hundreds.

PSYCHOLOGY AND SOCIETY OF THE BEHIR

Behirs prefer inhabiting dry, rocky hills (although rumors of jungle and desert behirs persist), basking in the scalding sun between hunting forays and patrols of their territories. Frequently lairing in cliffside caves, plateaus, rocky spires, or other high natural hiding spots, behirs seek out homes that afford them a view of the surrounding lands and prove difficult for creatures unable to climb sheer surfaces to access.

Most behirs live solitary existences, claiming all the land visible from their lairs as their territory. As behirs favor lofty homes, a behir's alleged domain might span dozens of miles, with its lair always at the center. However, these contended dominions are regularly exaggerated, possibly encompassing the prior claims of other creatures, or even whole cities a lone behir could never hope to overtake. Regardless, behirs are violently territorial creatures and attempt to drive out any beings they perceive as threats, while subjugating weaker creatures. This often leads to lengthy conflicts between behirs and humanoids or other powerful monsters, all with equal belief in their ownership of the land.

In the cases where behirs win such disputes, whole regions of weaker creatures might pay homage to a single behir as landlord—or even deity. Although physically powerful and intelligent enough to communicate, behirs make poor leaders and worse rulers. Little more than oversized, self-interested bullies, behirs care nothing for the "weaklings" that dwell within their territories. Rather, they treat such vassals little better than slaves and livestock, often demanding ridiculous tributes of food or wealth. Also, due to their often sporadic mood

swings—often blamed on the powerful electrical discharges occurring in such close proximity to their brains—behirs quickly neglect or forget responsibilities and promises. Such shifts commonly occur every 5 to 10 minutes and might prove dangerous, as a behir can seem agreeable—even playful—one moment and suspicious or antagonistic the next.

Despite their brutishness as rulers, behirs are not innately evil creatures. Although particularly foul-tempered exceptions that cross the line surely exist, most behirs adhere to a neutral outlook. However, this neutrality combined with a relatively low intellect and great physical prowess makes behirs exceptionally self-concerned. Canny humanoids might use this sense of self-superiority to their advantage, as behirs are highly susceptible to flattery, especially pertaining to their horns and size.

Behirs are immune to electricity and relish roaming or climbing to the peaks of their lairs amid thunderstorms, becoming quite excited and agitated when the lightning begins to strike. The mating cycle of behirs coincides with the hottest days of summer, when electrical storms rage most frequently. During such times the swift popping bellows of behir mating cries mingle with regular crashes of thunder. Travelers should be extremely wary of wandering through an agitated behir's territory during this time of year and especially in the middle of such a storm.

Occasionally, in areas with a large enough food supply, a mated pair of behirs bond for several years—usually somewhere between two and twelve. A pair of behirs usually produce one small clutch of between eight and ten eggs. These eggs resemble large geodes tinged with electric blue lines, similar to lapis lazuli, and might be mistaken for huge blue gemstones. Typically, only half of the eggs produce live young, and only half that number survive the first few weeks of life. This relatively high mortality rate keeps behir numbers in check, especially considering the huge amount of food required to sustain even one in an area.

BEHIR AMBUSHES

Devious creatures with a variety of lethal abilities, behirs make deadly opponents even on level battlefields. However, with the instincts of a predator, a behir never chooses to attack unless it possesses a distinct tactical advantage.

Tunnel Attack: Although not skilled tunnelers, behirs are particularly adept at navigating and detecting threats underground. Either making use of the natural crevices of the terrains they favor or intimidating servants into creating tunnels, behirs often lie in wait within such depressions. When prey nears, a behir can extend its head and neck from the hole and attack with its breath weapon while the rest of its body remains below (granting it cover). If its targets instead become threats the behir can slip underground, where few creatures would dare follow, possibly even arising from another opening to attack again.

Shanghai Strike: Swift predators with the ability to climb sheer surfaces, behirs can outmaneuver most opponents. Even if a group looks too powerful for a behir to attack head-on, it might strike anyway, grappling or swallowing a single opponent, then retreat up a cliff or elsewhere its enemies can't follow. In this manner, it might dispatch its foes one at a time while subjecting itself to the least danger possible.

Death from Above: A behir's attack more likely originates from a cliff face or cavern wall above its adversaries than from directly in front. Capable of moving in directions most opponents rarely consider, behirs use such tactics to their advantage and attack from above whenever possible. Such arrangements also allow behirs to knock down rocks and cause cave-ins (much like the Stone Blocks from Ceiling trap on page 71 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*).

BEHIR AND NOW

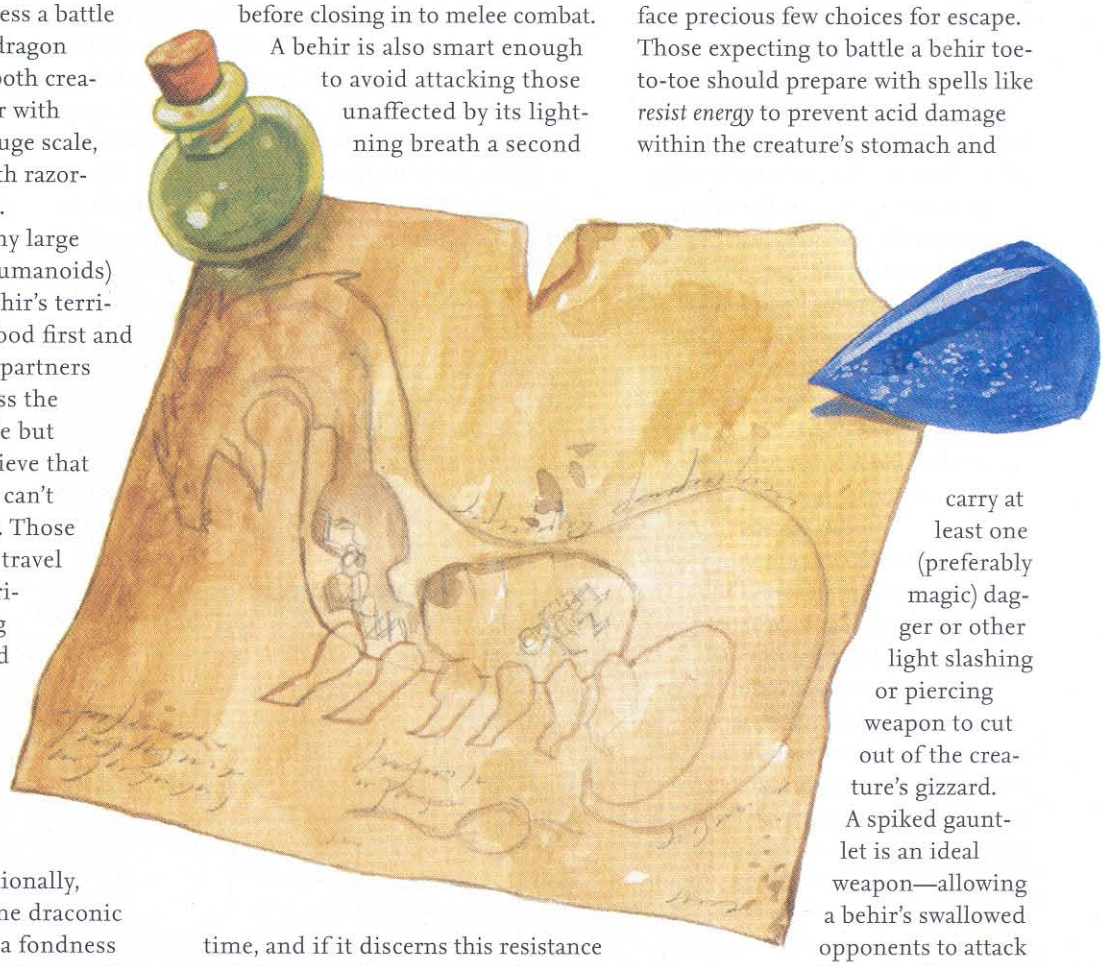
Long a piece of D&D history, the behir numbers with the bulette, mind flayer, and dozens of other monstrosities as a unique creation of the Dungeons & Dragons game. First appearing as a new threat in Gary Gygax's famous 1982 adventure, *S4: The Lost Caverns of Tsojcanth*, the behir found good company among the first published descriptions of demon lords like Baphomet, Graz'zt, Kostchtchie, and even Fraz-Urb'luu (see page 24 of this issue). The behir has also recently been reinterpreted, bigger and more deadly than ever, as a Huge model in the *Giants of Legend* expansion for *Dungeons & Dragons Miniatures*.

Behir mothers raise their young for two years, first providing hatchlings with regurgitated meat before teaching them to hunt small animals. Male behirs take little interest in their young, except for occasionally providing them with food and doing them the service of not ingesting them.

After the second year, the mother behir drives out the surviving juveniles with blasts of lightning and thunderous bellows forcing the young to find their own territories. Most behirs that become threats to humanoid settlements are juvenile behirs seeking their own domains.

Behirs and dragons are dire enemies and never willingly tolerate each other's presence within their respective territory. When a behir and dragon catch sight (or scent) of each other, bloodshed inevitably follows. Those who witness a battle between a behir and dragon recall it with awe, as both creatures assail each other with breath attacks and gouge scale, muscle, and sinew with razor-sharp claws and teeth.

Besides dragons, any large animals (including humanoids) that wander into a behir's territory are considered food first and potential bargaining partners second. Behirs possess the capability to negotiate but only do so if they believe that for some reason they can't take what they desire. Those who must frequently travel through a behir's territory find that offering large amounts of food (such as a cow or a horse)—along with a healthy amount of self-depreciating flattery—is a good way to keep a behir from attacking. Additionally, perhaps owing to some draconic ancestry, behirs have a fondness for treasure, coveting silver to the exclusion of all other offerings. If properly wooed with such riches, food, and compliments, some behirs might be convinced to reveal information or perform favors for lesser creatures.



VS. BEHIRS

Although nowhere near as intelligent as an average human, behirs possess numerous deadly abilities and enough intellect to make clever decisions and plan attacks with cunning and reason.

Beware the Breath: Like a dragon, a behir possesses a breath weapon—a line of lightning that deals terrible damage. Behirs can only use this ability once every 10 rounds, meaning that they purposefully maneuver themselves to line up foes for maximum effect. A behir frequently identifies the most dangerous-looking enemy and unleashes its breath weapon on him first in hopes of killing him off before closing in to melee combat. A behir is also smart enough to avoid attacking those unaffected by its lightning breath a second time, and if it discerns this resistance early it attempts to destroy such opponents with physical attacks first.

Avoid Grappling: When initiating a grapple—almost always using its bite and improved grab ability—a behir's formidable grapple bonus (at least +25) practically ensures a good grasp on a victim. The round after achieving a hold, a behir constricts before unleashing its fearsome rake attack. This rake attack is the only means in which a behir can bring its numerous but relatively short claws to bear, and thus it makes use of this attack whenever possible.

As this series of attacks proves so common when facing behirs, adventures should seek to avoid melee combat with such creatures at all costs. If such a battle proves unavoidable, spells like *bull's strength*, *freedom of movement*, and *grease* should see generous use.

Getting Out of the Gullet: Those who do fail at grappling with a behir are likely to be swallowed, where they face precious few choices for escape. Those expecting to battle a behir toe-to-toe should prepare with spells like *resist energy* to prevent acid damage within the creature's stomach and carry at least one (preferably magic) dagger or other light slashing or piercing weapon to cut out of the creature's gizzard. A spiked gauntlet is an ideal weapon—allowing a behir's swallowed opponents to attack without having to draw a weapon first.

Adroit Ambushers: Once alerted to the presence of enemies, behirs favor attacking by surprise. A behir's decent Hide bonus allows it to remain out of sight from all but the most observant creatures, while its skill at climbing lets it plan ambushes from the most unexpected directions (see the Behir Ambushes sidebar).

Behirs With Character Levels: Possessing a better-than-average Charisma, it's quite possible that an advanced behir might take levels in sorcerer. Alternatively, some behirs advance as barbarians, augmenting their already formidable fighting prowess with rage and enhanced speed.

AGE OF WORMS

by Jason Bulmahn • illustraed by Wayne Reynolds • cartography by Kyle Hunter

Wormfood

Surviving the Age of Worms Adventure Path

While the pages of *Dungeon* magazine present everything the DM needs to run the Age of Worms Adventure Path, every month *Dragon* gives the players of that—or any other campaign—tools to enhance their gaming experience.

Having a home is important for any band of adventurers. Critical to planning future quests, stashing valuables, and recuperating from injury, a home is more than just another way to spend hard-earned gold. It is often mandatory. Frequently, characters stay at an inn or rough it in the wild. Presented here is an inexpensive opportunity for a more permanent dwelling.

Located on the outskirts of the Diamond Lake community, a ruined mine office and dwelling sits unoccupied, without an owner. This crumbling office is the site of the PCs' first meeting in "The Whispering Cairn" (appearing in *Dungeon* #124). The previous owner of the building, the mining manager Ulgo Fant, abandoned the place more than fifty years ago when his mine ran dry. When he died over a decade ago, the property was left without an owner. Few have bothered to visit this wreck since its abandonment. Young children from the town often come up to the building on a dare and a few years back an inexperienced thief took up residence here before moving on to more lucrative trade routes.

This building can easily be imported into any campaign. If set within a city, it was owned by a merchant and his family who moved on years ago for unexplained reasons. In this case, the local land office would be more than happy to turn over the building to anyone willing to repair it (perhaps for a small fee).

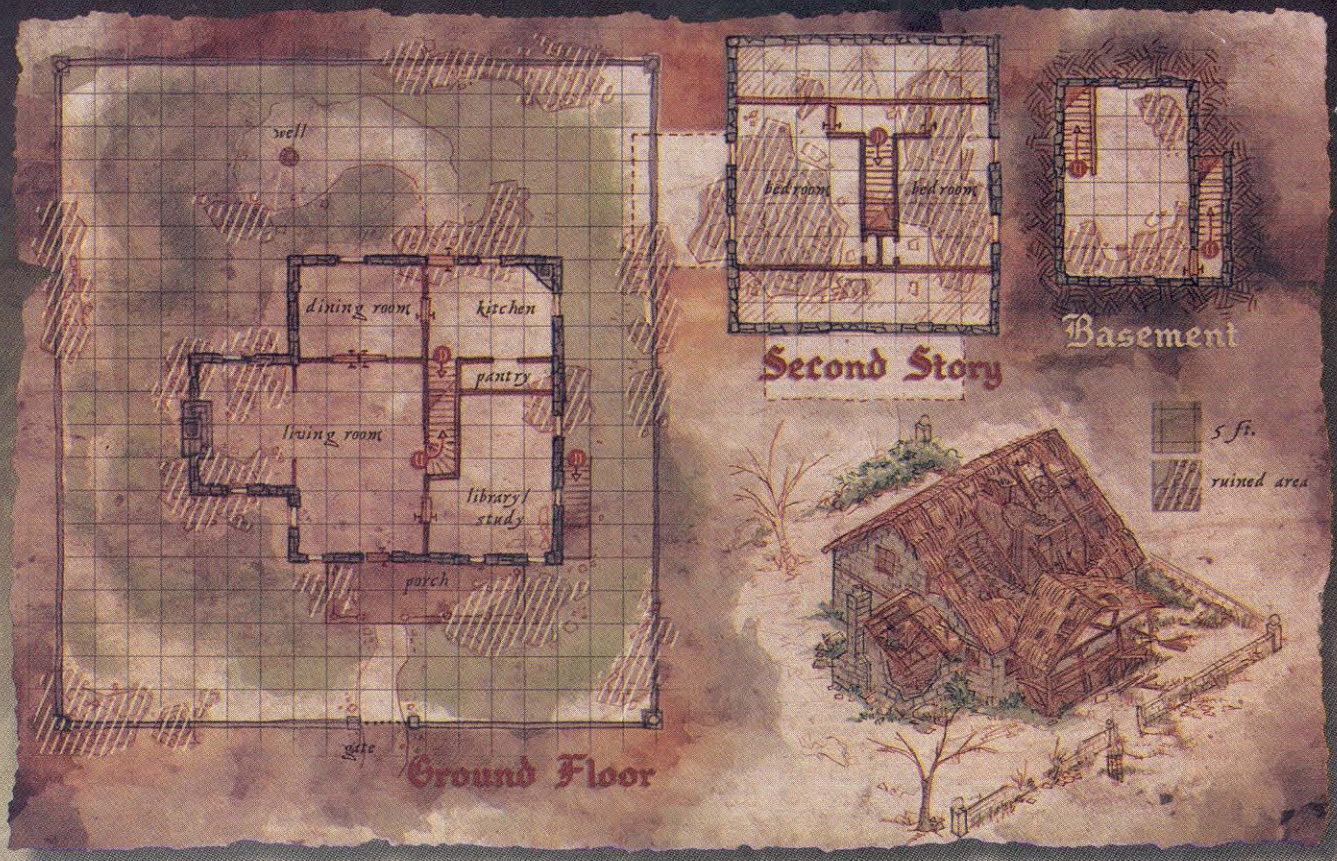
The Yard

A modest dwelling squats upon the crown of a small hill. While the rough stone walls of the first floor look mostly intact, the second floor has completely collapsed. A half height wall rings the house, but it too is in a state of severe disrepair. Rubble and dense weeds choke the yard.

The entire yard is considered difficult terrain except for the small path leading up to the building. Clearing the yard requires 20 total hours of work and makes the yard normal terrain. Behind the building, a stone well rises up out of the weeds. Although the bucket is gone, the water is clean, if a bit brackish. In the back, the remains of a wooden outhouse lie in an unrecognizable heap. Rebuilding the small structure requires DC 10 Craft (carpentry) skill checks until the value of the completed structure reaches 20 gp. There is no cost for this construction as all the raw materials are present.

The Building

Made of smooth stone blocks, this building stands in shambles. Thick vines creep up the side and most of the windows are broken. The front door hangs open, barely on its hinges, under a sagging and partially collapsed porch.



Part of the front porch has collapsed, but it still allows entry to the building. The two exterior doors are damaged but are still sound and easily repaired with an hour's worth of work and a successful DC 15 Craft (carpentry) skill check. The locks on the doors are rusted beyond repair and must be replaced (see page 128 of the *Player's Handbook* for prices). The walls and doors have the following statistics.

Wooden Doors: 1-1/2 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 15; Break DC 18.

Stone Walls: 1 ft. thick; hardness 8; hp 90; Break DC 35; Climb DC 20 (15 with vines).

Clearing the debris from around the building and the second floor requires a total of 40 hours of work. Most of this debris is still suitable for repairing the building and offsets much of the cost. Repairing the outer structure of the building requires DC 15 Craft (stoneworking) skill checks until the value of the completed structure reaches 200 gp. This repairs all the walls on the first floor, including those in the living room and the porch. The second floor requires much more work and is completed when the value of the structure reaches 500 gp. This construction requires only 1 gp of raw material for every 10 gp of construction completed if the present materials are used (as opposed to half the cost).

The windows cannot be repaired and must be either boarded over or replaced. Replacing a window costs 2 gp and 1 hour of work for each window.

CRAFT 101

Although the mechanics are fully detailed in the *Player's Handbook*, few make use of the Craft skill. However, for the purposes of this article, familiarity with this oft-overlooked skill is vital.

Craft skill checks can be made in one of two ways, depending upon the time available. If the check is made at the end of one week's work, the result times the DC equals the amount of work completed in terms of sp. If instead the check is made at the end of one day, the amount of work completed equals the check result times the DC in cp. The work is completed when its total value is reached. Multiple characters can contribute to this work. If the skill check is less than the DC then no progress is made in that time. If the skill check fails by 5 or more, half of the raw materials are ruined and you have to pay that cost again. In this case, such a loss equals half the cost of the construction to be completed (even if no raw material costs were required).

THE INTERIOR

Small mounds of debris litter the floor of the building's interior. Loose stones, dead weeds, and grime cover virtually every surface. Paintings must have once adorned the place as indicated by the particular stain patterns marring the walls. The only light comes from thin shafts sneaking in from outside illuminating clouds of dust dancing through the stale air.

CAN'T SOMEONE ELSE DO IT?

To avoid spending valuable adventuring time on construction, you might want to hire others to clean up and repair the building. Listed below is each individual task, the cost to hire an expert to do it, and the amount of work an expert can do in one day (in hours for tasks that do not require Craft checks and in terms of sp completed for those that do). Where skill checks are needed, the expert is assumed to have a +8 bonus on the check.

Task	Expert	Cost per Day	Amount per day
Cleaning the yard	Laborer	1 sp	8 hours per day
Rebuilding the outhouse	Carpenter (craftperson)	3 sp	18 sp per day
Clear the debris	Laborer	1 sp	8 hours per day
Fixing the first floor	Stone carver (craftperson)	3 sp	27 sp per day
Fixing the second floor	Stone carver (craftperson)	3 sp	27 sp per day
Cleaning the interior	Laborer	1 sp	8 hours per day
Renovating the first floor	Limner	6 sp	8 hours per day
Renovating the second floor	Carpenter (craftperson)	3 sp	27 sp per day

Adding an architect to this process costs an additional 5 sp per day, but increases the amount of work performed each day by stone carvers (to 30 sp per day) and carpenters (to 20 sp for the first floor and 30 sp for the second floor per day).

Generally, no more than six carpenters and eight stone carvers are available at any one time to work on a project of this size. Assuming that the maximum number of craftsmen are hired along with an architect, a limner, and a laborer, the reconstruction requires 21 days worth of work at a cost of 87.5 gp for the experts alone. This is in addition to any costs for raw material (roughly 400 gp depending upon the construction options chosen).

The first floor of the manor consists of five chambers. The largest of these is the living room, part of which has completely collapsed. Directly to the right of the living room space is what was once an office. The bookshelves and desk have thoroughly rotted and what few tomes and mine maps remain are ruined and illegible. Adjoining the living room is a sizable dining room. Any furniture that remains in the room is completely soiled and worthless. The kitchen contains an actual fire pit, but the chimney is blocked and must be cleared before it can be used. The pantry, attached to the kitchen, has a number of empty and broken shelves along with two empty barrels. A staircase in the living room is choked with debris and leads to the remains of the second floor. Another in the kitchen leads to a crude cellar.

The second floor of the manor is in complete ruins. Although there is no roof in its current state, the floor above prevents most of the rainwater from leaking into the first floor.

The cellar is partially collapsed, but stable at the current time. Along one wall, a crumbling wine rack still stands, although others have already plundered it, leaving a pile of empty and broken bottles at its base.

The interior can be cleared of debris with 20 hours of work. The first floor can then be renovated with an additional 40 hours of work and 50 gp in supplies (paint, replacement floor boards, and plaster). Renovating the interior of the second floor requires successful DC 15 Craft (carpentry) skill checks until the value of the construction reaches 200 gp. Since the damage here is so extreme, the PCs must pay half the construction value for raw materials.

Stocking the manor with the appropriate furniture and necessary supplies requires 200 gp. This cost includes beds, chairs, rugs, tables, and kitchen supplies. This makes the place basically functional and comfortable enough for complete bed rest (see natural healing on page 146 of the *Player's Handbook*). Increasing this expenditure to 1,000 gp along with repairing the rest of the structure as noted earlier, gives the owners a +2 circumstance bonus on Diplomacy and Intimidate checks made inside against those impressed by wealth (typically the poor and merchant classes).

USES FOR THE DM

PCs with an established base offer a number of opportunities for future adventure. While giving the characters a use for Craft skills, a home also ties them to a location, giving them a stake in the town and a focus for their efforts.

The manor presented here also opens up a number of options for side plots and can act as a springboard for entire adventures. The deed to the property could be located elsewhere, requiring the PCs to go pick it up. A group of monsters moves into the area, forcing the PCs to deal with the problem. Maybe one of the maps in the office is not as crumbled as the others and contains an odd set of runes. What is buried under the collapsed part of the cellar? Might it be one of the former occupants or was it sealed on purpose, hiding other deeper chambers? The options are endless.

Whatever you decide, giving the PCs a home is a boon to everyone involved, but be careful not to make it a hassle. Too many monster attacks or thieves in the night will ruin the usefulness of a home, turning a focal point for the group into a burden not easily disposed of.

Next month: "Worm Food Part 2: Shopping at Taggin's General Store."

by Richard Farrese • illustrated by Jeff Laubenstein

TREASURES OF THE GNOME HILLS

Although most people don't realize it, gnome culture is filled with a multitude of intricate art forms, mysterious histories, and ancient legends. Masters of illusion, gnomes are also cunning, imaginative, and gifted craftsmen who never cease to amaze those who—more often than not—refuse to acknowledge their worth. Like their distant dwarven cousins, gnomes reveal their true ingenuity in not just their mundane works, but also through their magical creations.

ARMBANDS OF PRESTIDIGITATION

In gnome society, Ranvarath the Magician held renown for his dazzling stage performances. Dubbed the Father of Illusions by most sages and historians of his kind, wizards and sorcerers of all races recognize the gnome Ranvarath as having developed and created several well known spells and wondrous items. Among these are the armbands he wears in every fresco and statue created in his image.

Made of simple brown leather carved with several interconnected decorative circles, gnomes sometimes refer to these magic armbands as *Ranvarath's gift*. This easy to spot design, done in shades of beige, stands out upon the otherwise unremarkable leather surface of the bracers.

Armbands of prestidigitation confer a +2 enhancement bonus to Dexterity as well as a +5 competence bonus on all Sleight of Hand checks. The wearer also gains the ability to use *mage hand* and *prestidigitation* each three times per day. Both armbands must be worn in order for their magic to be effective.

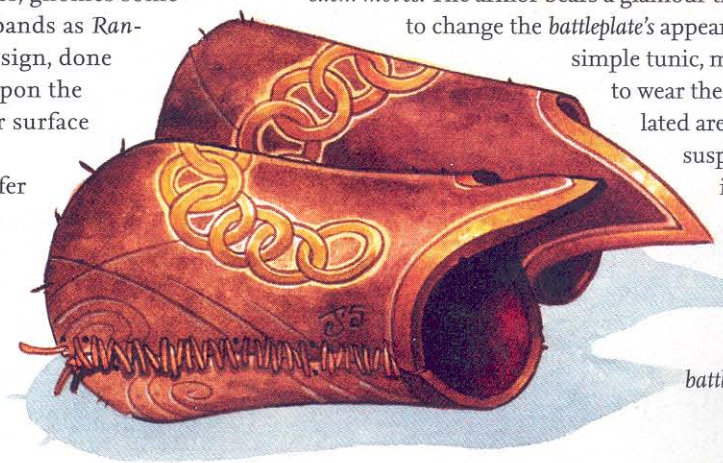
Moderate transmutation; CL 7th; Craft Wondrous Item, *cat's grace, mage hand, prestidigitation;* Price 11,700 gp; Weight 1 lb.

BATTLEPLATE

Commissioned by Ramvinot of the Single Eye, a forgotten smith crafted these intricate suits of armor. History recalls that Ramvinot, a pious follower of Gaerdal Ironhand (the gnome god of vigilance and martial defense), used apparently unarmed secret police who used magic to defend gnome lands from overconfident invaders. Although time has claimed the names of these brave bardic warriors, many suits of *battleplate* remain.

Otherwise unremarkable in appearance, an etching of a wide maple tree with golden leaves decorates this armor's glistening silver breastplate.

A suit of *battleplate* is a *+2 mithral breastplate of improved silent moves.* The armor bears a glamour that allows its wearer to change the *battleplate's* appearance to that of a simple tunic, making it possible to wear the armor in a populated area without rousing suspicions. Finally, in addition to the Move Silently bonus granted by the armor's improved silent moves, *battleplate* grants its



wearer a +5 competence bonus on Jump and Tumble checks. Because its mithral construction makes *battleplate* light armor, bards can cast spells while wearing it without the risk of arcane spell failure.

Moderate transmutation; CL 9th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Still Spell, *disguise self, jump, silence;* Price 31,050 gp; Weight 30 lb.

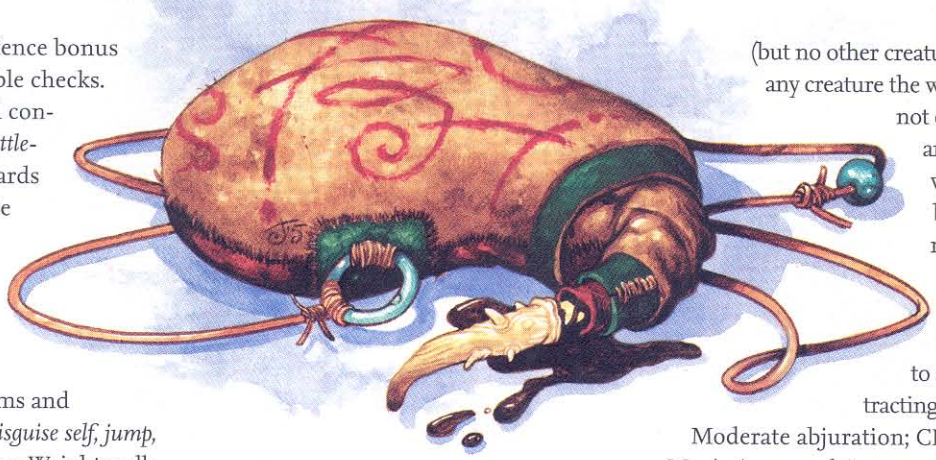
DEVIL'S PASTE

This sticky substance is primarily composed of finely crushed rocks, volcanic ashes, fungi, and the blood and oils from various creatures. Wizards from the Order of the Deep, an organization devoted to ridding the world (beginning with the Underdark) of evil, created this practical substance. Especially designed to help gnome warriors combat creatures made of or living in fire, wizards of the Order of the Deep continue to make *devil's paste* to this day.

Devil's paste is a thick dark brown goo similar in both color and texture to chocolate pudding or mud. It sticks easily to the skin and clothing of those who use it, but *devil's paste* gives its users a dirty and savage appearance—a fact that makes some gnomes of nobler heritage obstinately refuse its use. Typically, the substance is kept in wineskins treated with oil that allow quick extraction of the paste. A wineskin's worth of *devil's paste* contains enough to cover four Small or two Medium creatures.

When applied, *devil's paste* provides resistance to fire 20 and a +4 resistance bonus on all saving throws made against fire and fire-based spells and effects. It takes 1 minute to apply *devil's paste* to the body. Its effects last for 24 hours after application or until washed off with soap and water (which takes 5 minutes).

Moderate abjuration; CL 7th; Craft Wondrous Item, *resist energy;* Price 8,000 gp; Weight 2 lb. (full wineskin).



MOONRAT'S BANE

Many believe the gnome god Baervan Wildwanderer gifted the first *moonrat's bane* to an obscure wizard and master smith said to have delved into the secrets of lycanthropy a millennium ago. At that time, Baervan and his followers fought a secretive war against an influx of wererats and their mundane rodent kin. As the war turned sour, Baervan presented the first of these blades and commanded his loyal servitor to create many more. The tides turned as the nature god's gift spread among gnome enclaves.

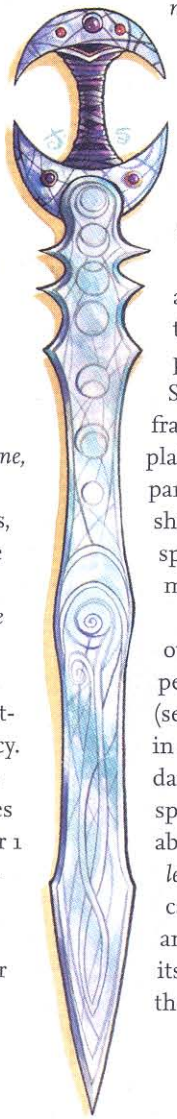
These ancient relics, artfully crafted greatswords fashioned from a rare alloy of a bright silvery hue, emit a clear radiance strong enough to illuminate a 20-foot radius when held. The grip of a *moonrat's bane,* covered with a thick layer of interwoven purple leather laces, proves remarkably comfortable to wield.

At first glace, a *moonrat's bane* appears as a typical Small +2 *silver greatsword.* Barely perceptible runes upon the blade (written in Gnome) reveal its potency. When wielded in battle against rats and ratlike creatures, causes these creatures to be shaken for 1 minute upon a successful critical hit. This includes normal rats, dire rats, moon rats, rat swarms, wererats, and any other creature with ratlike qualities (but no other creatures). Finally, any creature the wielder does not consider an opponent within the blade's glow receives a +2 bonus on all saving throws made to avoid contracting a disease.

Moderate abjuration; CL 11th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *remove disease;* Price 15,530 gp; Weight 8 lb.

MISLEADING NECKLACE

Nefarimas the Ancient created the first of these mundane-looking necklaces shortly before his death nearly a century ago. Nefarimas's apprentices learned the secrets of making these items and produced a number of *misleading necklaces* in the years that followed. Although each maker fashioned these magic necklaces according to his own tastes, every necklace has one thing in common: a large chunk of amber that makes up the centerpiece of the necklace.



Most *misleading necklaces* are made from simple silver threads upon which hang rough pieces of dark golden amber. Some more elaborate crafters frame the amber in gold, silver, or platinum designs. The semitransparent stone can take almost any shape, from neat triangles, round spheres, and perfect squares to more organically shaped forms.

A *misleading necklace* helps its owner fake his own death once per day as an immediate action (see the following page), but only in response to the wearer taking damage from a magic item, spell, spell-like ability, or supernatural ability. When activated, the *misleading necklace* instantaneously casts both a *cure serious wounds* and an extended *mislead* spell on its wearer. The figment created by the *mislead* effect appears in the

IMMEDIATE ACTION

Much like a swift action, an immediate action consumes a very small amount of time, but represents a larger expenditure of effort and energy than a free action. However, unlike a swift action, an immediate action can be performed at any time—even if it's not your turn. Casting feather fall is an immediate action (instead of a free action, as stated in the spell description of the *Player's Handbook*), since the spell can be cast at any time.

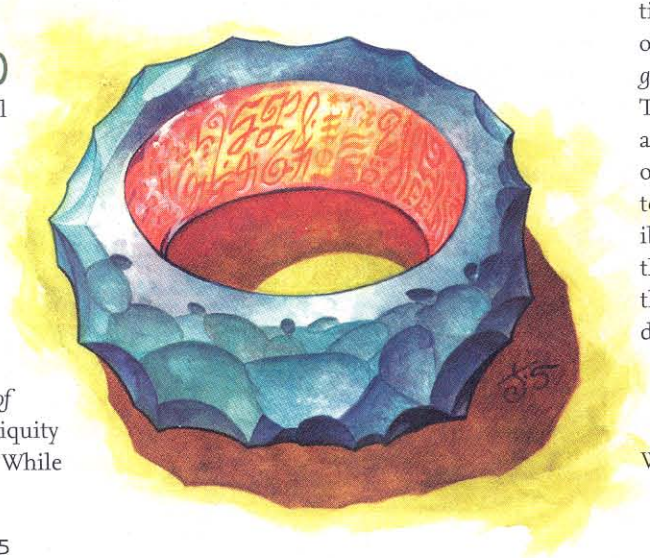
Using an immediate action on your turn is the same as using a swift action, and counts as your swift action for that turn. You cannot use another immediate action or a swift action until after your next turn if you have used an immediate action when it is not currently your turn (effectively, using an immediate action before your turn is equivalent to using your swift action for the coming turn). You also cannot use an immediate action if you are currently flat-footed.

owner's place. In the next instant, the figment of the owner appears to die in a way appropriate to damage-dealing effect (charred by flames, encased in ice, and so on). The effect is gruesome and spectacular, and the illusion is complete with smells, sounds, and thermal effects. The apparently dead figment remains in place for 3 minutes (30 rounds).

Strong illusion; CL 11th; Craft Wondrous Item, Extend Spell, *cure serious wounds, mislead;* Price 42,400 gp; Weight 1 lb.

RING OF GNOMEKIND

Legends hold that Garl Glittergold himself handed down these simple rings to his children. Although gnome literature and folklore concerning these godly gifts abound, many sages argue that *rings of gnomekind* lack the antiquity to be the gift of a god. While most sages (including some gnomes) subscribe to this theory, the majority of gnomes still cling to the idea that these valuable treasures hold godly origins.



Its outer edge crudely shaped from a simple gray stone of unremarkable value (such as granite), a quick glance paints a *ring of gnomekind* as a worthless piece of rock. The ring's smooth interior surface, however, holds myriad tiny and elaborate runes. Few understand the meaning of these strange markings, but anyone who puts on the ring instantly knows its powers.

A *ring of gnomekind* bestows a +2 bonus on Listen and Craft (alchemy) checks and increases the DC for all saving throws made against illusion spells cast by its wearer by +1. In addition, any Medium humanoid who dons a *ring of gnomekind* is instantly affected by both a *reduce person* spell and a *disguise self* spell that makes the wearer look like a gnome. These spells remain in place for as long as the creature wears the ring. Many gnomes consider wearing such a ring a true honor, as such a wearer becomes the embodiment of gnome strengths and virtues.

Strong transmutation; CL 13th; Craft Wondrous Item, *disguise self, reduce person,* creator must be gnome; Price 20,000 gp; Weight —.

TIARA OF SHADOW BLENDING

The creation of a renowned gnome necromancer, these wondrous items are extremely rare. *Tiaras of shadow blending* contain the essence of shadow—an element necromancers frequently study. Although few know about *tiaras of shadow blending,* assassins and rogues who hear of them actively seek these treasures, and willingly pay a small fortune to obtain one.

A *tiara of shadow blending* is made from basalt ornamented by a handful of black pearls. A closer look at the item reveals the pearls embedded in it lack the sheen of the tiara's shiny black luster. Although the surface of the item is glassy, it emits an eerie aura of shade when worn.

The *tiara of shadow blending* absorbs a portion of an area's ambient light, creating a menacing shadow around the owner's form. Three times per day, while in an area of shadowy illumination, its owner can blend into shadows, making him invisible as per the *greater invisibility* spell for 10 minutes. The tiara's wearer remains concealed as long as he remains within an area of shadowy illumination. In addition to the normal ways of negating invisibility or seeing an invisible creature, this invisibility is cancelled while in the area of any spell with the light descriptor or similar effect.

Moderate transmutation; CL 10th; Craft Wondrous Item, *deeper darkness, greater invisibility;* Price 30,000 gp; Weight 1 lb.

by Peter M. Ball
illustrated by Jonathan Wayshak

Visions of Fear

Few who knew Phade Evanshad in his youth could have predicted the terror he would later unleash. A slight and sickly youth, bullied by other children and plagued by nightmares for much of his adolescence, none suspected the cruel revenges and morbid delights he imagined even then. When Phade's natural mastery of magic first manifested—some say he willed it into existence through his frustrated rage—it was shaped by the incessant anger and fear that so inspired him. Delighting in his ability to spread abject panic with but a few severe gestures, Phade's transformation from a tortured child to a dark menace proved swift and startling.

While many common folk remember Phade as a cruel tyrant and self-proclaimed Master of All Fears, in arcane circles he remains better known for his development of new methods of using fear as a weapon. With his intimate knowledge of what it is to be afraid coupled with a burning passion to incite terror in others, Phade's documentation and rediscovery of numerous unique spells was far more prolific than many other sorcerers.

Phade's legacy of horrors came to an end in a conflagration of otherworldly fire that destroyed his tower. Along with their creator, many of Phade's signature spells disappeared, presumably destroyed in the fire. Yet something survived. Presented here are the contents of the only text found within the charred ruins, a folio inexplicably untouched by flame and seemingly newly penned entitled *Visions of Fear*. This fearful text, coveted by magic-using tyrants and sinister spellcasters the world over, is widely believed to constitute all that remains of the Master of All Fear's reign of terror. However, those who lived in dread of the foul magics of Phade Evanshad still can't help but suspect something more of the frightful sorcerer lives on, haunting their nightmares and possibly his only surviving work.

Glimpse of Fear

Illusion (Phantasm) [Fear, Mind-Affecting]
Level: Brd 1, Clr 1, Sor/Wiz 1
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./level)
Target: One living creature
Duration: 1 round/level; see text
Saving Throw: Will negates
Spell Resistance: Yes

You plunge the subject directly into a waking nightmare, immersing it in a world of fear for a brief instant. The change happens so fast that many creatures do not consciously sense it at all, but a failed Will save means the sudden shift in perception registers long enough to leave the subject shaken for 1 round per caster level. A shaken creature suffers a –2 penalty on attack rolls, saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks. Sightless creatures and creatures immune to fear effects are not affected by this spell.

In addition, a target that fails the Will save to resist this spell also takes a –4 penalty on all Will saves made to resist spells with the fear descriptor for the duration.

Inescapable Swarm

Illusion (Figment)
Level: Brd 5, Sor/Wiz 4

NEW SPELLS FROM VISIONS OF FEAR

Visions of Fear contains many spells from the *Player's Handbook* with the fear descriptor, along with a host of unique spells. Paradigms of dread-inspiring magic, the spells in this folio are some of the most sought after by all manner of corrupt and malicious spellcasters. The following spells represent the legacy of Phade Evanshad: a handful of ingeniously sinister spells that instill horror with their every casting.

BARD SPELL

1st-Level Bard Spells

Glimpse of Fear: A flash of horror causes the target to become shaken.

2nd-Level Bard Spells

Phade's Fearsome Aspect: The target gains a +5 bonus on Intimidate checks and can demoralize as a swift action.

3rd-Level Bard Spells

Vision of Fear: You gain knowledge of the target's greatest or most recent fear.

5th-Level Bard Spells

Inescapable Swarm: Targets feel as though they are covered by an invisible swarm of insects.

CLERIC SPELLS

1st-Level Cleric Spells

Glimpse of Fear: A flash of horror causes the target to become shaken.

2nd-Level Cleric Spells

Phade's Fearsome Aspect: The target gains a +5 bonus on Intimidate checks and can demoralize as a swift action.

3rd-Level Cleric Spells

Vision of Fear: You gain knowledge of the target's greatest or most recent fear.

SORCERER/WIZARD SPELLS

1st-Level Sorcerer/Wizard Spells

Glimpse of Fear: A flash of horror causes the target to become shaken.

2nd-Level Sorcerer/Wizard Spells

Phade's Fearsome Aspect: The target gains a +5 bonus on Intimidate checks and can demoralize as a swift action.

Vision of Fear: You gain knowledge of the target's greatest or most recent fear.

4th-Level Sorcerer/Wizard Spells

Inescapable Swarm: Targets feel as though they are covered by an invisible swarm of insects.

Sphere of Terror: Creates 30-ft. radius of supernatural shadow filled with deadly shadowy illusions.

Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./level)
Target: One creature/level, no two of which can be more than 30 feet apart.
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 round/level
Saving throw: Will disbelief, then Fortitude partial; see text
Spell Resistance: Yes

This spell causes the targets to feel as though thousands of spiders, ants, locusts, and other insects were crawling over their flesh, exactly as if they were caught in the heart of a swarm. The targets first get a Will save to recognize the sensations as unreal. Targets that fail this save become shaken. In addition, those that become shaken due to this spell's effects must make an additional Fortitude save. Targets that fail this Fortitude save are overwhelmed by the inescapable barrage of grotesque sensations, causing them to become nauseated.

Material Component: A handful of cobwebs wrapped between the fingers.

PHADE'S FEARSOME ASPECT

Illusion (Glamer)
Level: Brd 2, Clr 2, Sor/Wiz 2
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Touch
Target: Creature touched
Duration: 1 minute/level
Saving Throw: Will Negates (harmless)
Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

The target's facial features take on the aspect of a threatening creature seemingly birthed from the Abyss. The subject's eyes seem to change to glowing slits, its skin darkens and grows scales, and horns and sharp teeth appear to jut from its face. The change has no affect on the target's physical abilities, but it does bestow a +5 bonus on Intimidate checks and allows the target to make an attempt to demoralize opponents as a swift action. (See the Swift Action sidebar.)

Neither the caster nor the target of this spell has control over the specific features of the illusion and it cannot be used to create a specific disguise. Regardless of being unable to choose specific features and the horrific nature of your form, the illusion masks your appearance and grants you a +10 bonus on Disguise checks.

A creature that physically interacts with the features of a *Phade's fearsome aspect* gets a Will save to recognize it as an illusion. For example, a creature that touches the subject may attempt a Will save to realize the tactile sensations do not match the visual ones.

SPHERE OF TERROR

Illusion (Shadow) [Darkness, Fear, Mind-Affecting]
Level: Sor/Wiz 4
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)
Area: 30-ft. radius hemisphere
Duration: 1 round/level
Saving Throw: Will disbelief, then Fortitude half
Spell Resistance: Yes

This spell creates a globe filled with flickering shadows, similar to the spell *darkness*, causing a 30-foot radius to fill with shadowy illumination. All creatures in the area gain concealment

(20% miss chance). Even creatures that can normally see in such conditions (such as those with darkvision or low-light vision) have a miss chance in an area shrouded in magical darkness.

Normal lights (torches, candles, lanterns, and so forth) are incapable of brightening the area, as are spells with the light descriptor of lower level, such as *daylight*. Higher level light spells are not affected by *sphere of terror*. This spell counters or dispels any light spell of equal or lower spell level.

Those creatures surrounded by the shadows created by this spell that fail their Will save are shaken, unnerved by the shrieking and constant movement. In addition, they are attacked by the phantasmal creatures they fleetingly perceive, wracked by ghostly stabs and bites from behind. The sphere makes one attack every round against every creature within it that has failed its Will save, dealing 1d6 points of damage. These attacks persist for as long as the creature remains within the sphere.

Material Component: A claw or talon and a blindfold.

Vision of Fear

Divination
Level: Brd 3, Clr 3, Sor/Wiz 2
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 round
Range: 60 ft.
Target: 1 creature
Duration: Instantaneous/24 hours; (see text)
Saving Throw: Will negates
Spell Resistance: Yes

You get a sudden vision of either the target's greatest fear or its most recent source of fear, be it a situation, location, item, type of creature, or individual. You choose which fear to gain knowledge of, either greatest or most recent. The image is drawn directly from the subject's subconscious and is accompanied by a burst of vivid details. The intensity of the sensations connected to the vision and the clarity of the image is strong enough that the caster is treated as having first-hand knowledge of it for the purposes of *scrying* and having studied it carefully for the purposes of *teleporting*. This memory is magically aided and remains vivid for 24 hours, after which all but the vaguest images fade from your memory. If you attempt to *scry* upon or *teleport* using this memory after *vision of fear* has expired, you are treated as having second-hand knowledge in the case of *scry* and as having viewed the area once when using *teleport*.

If you choose to use this spell to gain knowledge of the subject's greatest fear, your intimate understanding of the target's fears causes it to suffer a –2 penalty on Will saves to resist any of your spells with the fear descriptor for the next 24 hours. After that time, your intimate understanding of the target's mind wanes and the target no longer suffers a penalty against your fear spells. However, you may cast this spell again to renew your understanding and again impose this penalty upon a target.

The spell has no effect on targets with an Intelligence lower than 3 or on creatures immune to fear. If the creature's most recent fear was due to a fear effect from a spell or spell-like ability, you immediately identify the fear as a magical compulsion (and not a true personal fear), although the spell does not also relate an earlier more private fear.

Swift Action

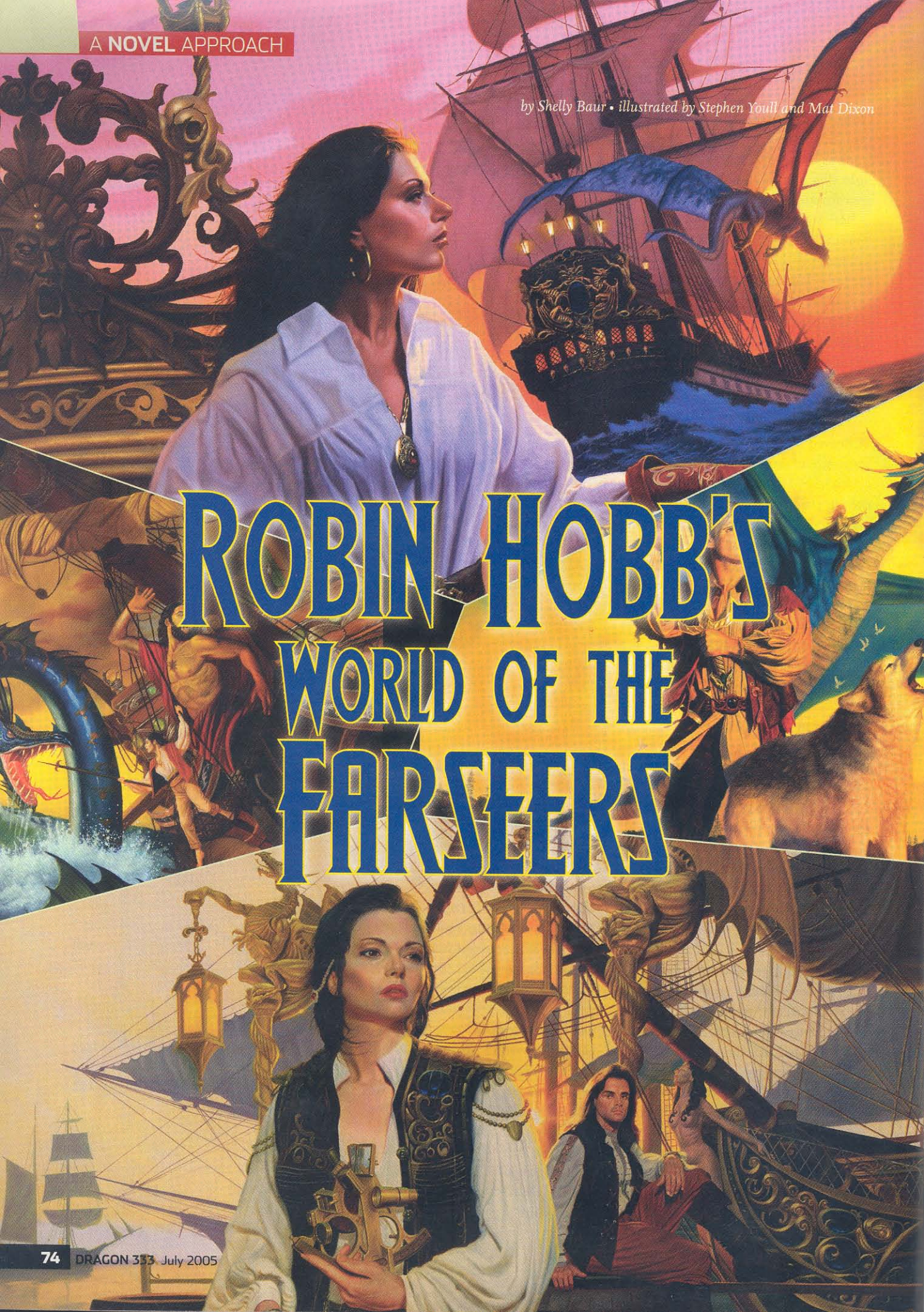
(Reprinted from the *Miniatures Handbook*, page 29)
A swift action consumes a very small amount of time but represents a larger expenditure of effort and energy than is the case with a free action. You can perform one swift action per turn without affecting your ability to perform other actions. In that regard, a swift action is like a free action. However, you may perform only a single swift action per turn, regardless of what other actions you take. You may take a swift action any time you would normally be allowed to take a free action. Swift actions usually involve magic or the activation of magic items; many characters (especially those who don't use magic) will never have an opportunity to use swift actions.

Casting a quickened spell is a swift action. In addition, casting any spell with a casting time of 1 swift action is a swift action.

Casting a spell with a casting time of 1 swift action does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

by Shelly Baur • illustrated by Stephen Youll and Mat Dixon

ROBIN HOBB'S WORLD OF THE FARSEERS



Robin Hobb's bestselling trilogies—Farseer, Liveship Traders, and Tawny Man—feature royal assassins, beast-magic wielders, would-be pirate kings, conflicting prophets, ships that live, and awe-inspiring dragons. These characters drive her adventures through an epic framework and offer a treasure hoard of unique gaming ideas.

In the Farseer trilogy, the royal bastard FitzChivalry Farseer begins secret training as a Royal Assassin and pledges to protect the Farseer family's rule over the feudalistic Six Duchies. Fitz comes to master two distinct forms of magic. One, the Skill, enables him to contact others who possess similar magic and affect them in a variety of ways. The other, the Wit, enables him to bond with animals. He must keep this beast magic hidden, though, as other people fear it.

Fitz uses these skills to preserve the throne both from internal strife and the Red Ship raiders of the northern isles. These pirates prove particularly menacing, as they wield a deadly new weapon called Forging, a magic that strips memories and humanity from their captives, leaving them little more than cunning beasts. Aiding Fitz are both his assassin mentor and the manipulative White Prophet. The White Prophet attempts to make Fitz his instrument, his "Catalyst," to effect changes in the world, but Fitz doesn't always cooperate.

After Fitz's adventures, the Liveship Traders series explores the world to the south, primarily a bustling port known as Bingtown. In the Liveship Traders, the Bingtown Traders have their own problems. A neighboring country of slavers seeks war, the city's decadent mother country raises Bingtown's tribute, and attacks by deadly sea serpents increase dramatically. Then there are the pirates, especially Captain Kennit.

Although he calls himself lucky, Captain Kennit stacks odds like an expert bookie. He commissions a special charm made from wizardwood—a mysterious material somehow connected to both sea serpents and the faint dreams of dragons—to protect him from enchantments. Over the course of the story, mysterious prophets convince him that he will become King of the Pirate Isles, but that he needs a magical Liveship to do it. The Liveships are living merchant ships made from wizardwood that gain sentience after three generations of sailors have served and died on their decks. However, a Liveship has never been captured. Thus, Kennit begins an adventure to change that.

Years later, back north, The Tawny Man trilogy begins with the royal family calling Fitz out of an early retirement to protect the new Farseer heir, Prince Dutiful, who isn't living up to his name. Several plots converge. First, the persecution of Fitz's magic increases, threatening blackmail and lynchings. Second, the Bingtown Traders seek an alliance with the Farseer realm against the slaving neighbor located between their two lands. Finally, negotiations result in a challenge to cut off the head of Icefyre, a dragon encased in a glacier. Fitz must choose between his loyalties to the Farseers, who want the dragon's head, and his role as the White Prophet's Catalyst, who believes that only the dragon's resurrection will move the world toward its greater fate.

Throughout all three series, Hobb weaves tales of adventure and magic, fashioning a world that should at once be familiar and captivatingly new to DUNGEONS & DRAGONS players.

TAKING INSPIRATION

Hobb illuminates three universal themes that might easily be worked into any campaign: fate, the outsider, and loyalty.

FATE

Having a fate that relies upon a character's choices raises the stakes of any campaign. In one possible scenario, a prophet NPC might choose a player character as his "Catalyst." The prophet's

WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU?

Robin Hobb's books abound with examples of every major character class. Rogues recieve major coverage as pirates, assassins, and spies. Fitz, the royal assassin, demonstrates the benefits of working within the king's law rather than outside of it, gaining access to castle spy networks, royal garden plants for poisons, social legitmacy, and powerful protectors. Missions from the king make perfect quests for solo adventurers or small parties.

Players of wizards and sorcerers should also find ideas for spells and their usage on multiple levels, such as psioniclike skills, lower-level magic charms, and new magic items to create. The stories also show how players might use familiars or similarly bonded animals. Although bards are not arcane spellcasters in Hobb's world, bard players can pick up ideas for shaping adventures as well as a bard's role in a largely illiterate society. Additionally, druids might benefit from the beast magic, known as the Wit.

Ranger players can harvest some ideas for wilderness lore from both the Queen's huntswoman and Fitz's detailed journeys. Clerics and monks should check out the many examples of healing, the use and misuse of prophecy, and a first-rate example of an acolyte coming to terms with his teachings once he enters the real world. The reaver pirates also make great barbarians, showing their cunning as well as their martial prowess. Although many of the characters throughout these series are more like anti-heroes, the concept of sacrifice in several forms should appeal to paladins.

For DMs, Hobb provides a gold mine of NPCs, focusing on their motives, conflicts, and interactions instead of just their looks and roles. Many setting descriptions—from mountains to woodlands, upriver or along the coast, over glaciers or icy seas—could be pieced into a campaign. Ideas for adventures also abound, including how to arrange a kidnapping or run a piratical adventure.

utterances could be cryptic, false, unbelievable, or downright annoying, but they should all motivate the character to action. The DM might also seed future adventure ideas into his ramblings. Strangers seeking the prophet or his chosen one might randomly show up, causing even more problems for the character but legitimizing the prophet's words. With a headstrong personality, the prophet might challenge the party's intended direction and lead them toward goals they never expected.

Alternatively, seemingly mundane natural items could yield a prophecy that kicks off an adventure. Nearly any random arrangement or natural occurrence could be used as a medium for prophesy, such as driftwood washed up on a beach in specific patterns. Getting to the place where such natural prophets exist should be difficult, perhaps forcing characters to face enchanted forests, tricky tides, angered guardians, or innumerable other threats. Of course, once the PCs find the prophetical site, it might require a Knowledge (arcana) skill check or even a specialized interpreter to reveal their fates.

THE OUTSIDER

Hobb's books present a range of archetypes: the orphan, the mentally disabled, the physically deformed, the insane, the defrocked priest, the slave, and more, all ready to be mined as NPCs. Defying such characters' typecasting can turn predictable plots into wholely new and exciting adventures. For example, players won't expect "innocent" children or the mentally or physically disabled to be working as spies.

Outsiders also often face a wide range of prejudice and mistrust. Such persecution varies from mere thoughtlessness to pettiness, inquisition to full-blown warfare. These conflicts might become major adventures in themselves, such as the struggle to end slavery or persecution. Instead of showing extreme contrasts, a DM might present gradations that make the characters uncomfortable but not inclined to act—at least not initially. Building this kind of revulsion until it comes to a revolutionary head can make characters who act against the established norm feel like they're having a positive effect on the game world, even if only in a small way.

Hobb also varies the idea of outwardly marking an outsider. The wearing of jewelry (like a freedom ring) earned by former slaves to show they're free or facial tattoos denoting a specific social class serve as examples of separating elements in a fantasy society that might carry a whole load of social stigmas or benefits.

LOYALTIES

In the Liveship Trader trilogy a Southern Gothic-style Bingtown Trader family, the Vestrits, threatens to be pulled apart over the contract to pay for their Liveship, their choices of professions and mates, the lure of easy money, the pressures of their social status, and the risks of aiding dragons. The breaking and forming of pacts, treaties, oaths, family ties, and other bonds all provide hooks not just for DMs but for players to learn more about their characters.

While dramatic breaks offer more excitement, gradual erosions of loyalties offer more complexity and opportunities to develop both characters and the world. Set up scenarios that allow characters to bend social rules or tell white lies to smooth over short-term problems and temporarily gain what they desire but that also snag characters in moral dilemmas later.

GUARDIAN SHIPS

Throughout Robin Hobb's novels some of the most compelling characters are also some of her most innovative fantasy creations: living ships. Presented here are living sentient ships inspired directly by Hobb's works.

GUARDIAN SHIP

Gargantuan Construct
Hit Dice: 24d10 + 60 size (192 hp)
Initiative: –1
Speed: Swim 40 ft.*
Armor Class: 18 (–4 size, –1 Dex, +13 natural), touch 5, flat-footed 18
Base Attack/Grapple: +18/+41
Attack: Slam +25 (2d8+16)
Full Attack: Slam +25/+20/+15/+10 melee (2d8+16)
Space/Reach: 20 ft./15 ft.
Special Attacks: —
Special Qualities: Construct traits, telepathic link, blindsense, remove pain
Saves: Fort +10, Will +7, Reflex +10
Abilities: Str 32, Dex 8, Con —, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 14
Skills: Diplomacy +9, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (arcana) +4, Knowledge (geography) +9, Knowledge (history) +7, Knowledge (nature) +20, Sense Motive +5, Survival +22, Swim +29

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: ROBIN HOBB

Robin Hobb grew up in Alaska, married a commercial fisherman, and spent many summers aboard ships. Currently she lives in the Pacific Northwest's Puget Sound area where she combines her personal experience with ships and the sea with a deep range of knowledge including natural history, psychology, and mythology. Imagine Patrick O'Brian of *Master and Commander* fame writing fantasy books. Also like him, she writes longer, series-based stories that allow for more development of both characters and plots.

While Hobb's next book remains under wraps, her previous books have released at a rate of one per year, so readers should expect a new adventure later in 2005. Meanwhile, those who can't wait can content themselves with a short story on the Bingtown Traders found in the *Legends II* anthology, edited by Robert Silverberg. Hobb also has several other books in print written under the alias Megan Lindholm—including the acclaimed modern fantasy, *Wizard of the Pigeons* (1986)—each of which have their own unique voice separate from Hobb's. By the way, Robin Hobb is a pen name, too.

Upcoming appearances and more about Robin Hobb can be found at **robinhobb.com**.

Feats: Awesome Blow, Cleave, Great Cleave, Great Fortitude, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Overrun, Improved Sunder, Iron Will, Power Attack
Environment: Any aquatic
Organization: Solitary or fleet (3–10)
CR: 14
Treasure: Double standard
Alignment: Usually lawful good
Advancement: 25–28 (Gargantuan), 29–42 (Colossal)
Level Adjustment: —

The hull of this impressive ship shines as if freshly polished and is devoid of even the slightest wear or barnacle. From its bow juts an intricately carved, wooden figurehead of a scantily clad woman, her head resting in one hand as if bored. As you watch, the figure turns her head to look around.

Guardian ships look like well-crafted 65-foot-long caravels. Setting them apart from normal ships are animated figureheads with the hull serving as their bodies. These figureheads have a name, sex, and full personality, as if they were living creatures. While guardian ships have an innate understanding of naval maneuvers and a keen awareness of the water, they sail best with a full complement of fifteen crewmembers. Only with a full crew can a guardian ship achieve full speed, as it has no control over its sails, rigging, or other parts not intrinsic to the hull itself.

Although loyalty to its family is one of a guardian ship's most noteworthy traits, a guardian ship needs a crewmember related by blood to the family serving aboard in order to feel truly secure. Otherwise, a guardian ship often displays its agitation by rocking or rippling its planks. If pushed too far, a guardian ship might turn homicidal and deliberately take on water to drown its crew.

Besides their magical properties, guardian ships can support the same crew, cargo, and armaments of a normal keelboat (see page 52 of the *Arms and Equipment Guide*). Creatures aboard a guardian ship are not treated as riding a mount.

COMBAT

Guardian ships initiate combat by charging into battle. After this initial attack, they are capable of warping their hulls to slam nearby opponents without upsetting those on board.

Blindsense (Ex): A guardian ship feels differences in wind direction, salt content, and tides as well as life forms and objects. Guardian ships can sense such vibrations and minute changes in the air and water around them within 60 feet. Opponents the guardian ship can't actually see still have total concealment against the guardian ship.

Remove Pain (Su): While a guardian ship cannot actually heal others, it can absorb pain from those with whom it has a telepathic link. A guardian ship may, as a free action, prevent dying creatures it shares a telepathic link with and who are on board from losing additional hit points as if it had administered a successful Heal check to stabilize them.

Telepathic Link (Su): A guardian ship can communicate telepathically with blood members of the family that owns it as per the spell *Rary's telepathic bond.* This connection remains in effect for as long as a member of the owning family is within 100 feet of the guardian ship.

Skills: A guardian ship has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

Swim Speed*: Although guardian ships possess swim speeds, they cannot move underwater. This speed denotes their movement speed on the surface of the water.

Carrying Capacity: A guardian ship can haul 50 tons of cargo, just as a normal keelboat.

CONSTRUCTION

A guardian ship is crafted from 50,000 pounds of magically treated wood and bound together by mithral nails and specially created alchemical agents, all of which cost 200,000 gp, including the wood. Assembling the body requires successful DC 25 Craft (carpentry) and Craft (shipmaking) checks. The creator must be 20th level and be able to cast divine spells. Completing the ritual drains 8,000 XP from the creator and requires the Craft Construct feat, *animate objects, geas/quest,* and *miracle.*

by Andy Collins
illustrated by Niklas Janssen

OFFICIAL ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS

This month, the Sage tackles questions on topics Large and Small (and Huge, and Tiny, and...), including size, reach, and space. If you have questions for the Sage, send them to **sageadvice@paizo.com**.

My stonechild (from *Races of Stone*) fighter wields a fullblade (from *Arms and Equipment Guide*). If he increases the weapon's size by one category, can he still wield it, and would it give him reach?

First of all, your stonechild couldn't wield such a weapon. While a stonechild (as a Medium creature) can wield a normal fullblade as a two-handed weapon thanks to the Exotic Weapon Proficiency (fullblade) feat, he couldn't wield a fullblade of a larger size category at all, even with the feat.

(Although the fullblade is described in *Arms and Equipment Guide* as a "Huge" weapon, this is a reference to the 3.0 rules for weapon size. Using the 3.5 rules for weapon sizes, the fullblade used by Medium creatures is actually a Large two-handed weapon with a special rule that allows a Medium creature to wield it with two hands.)

Normally, the smallest creature that could wield a Huge fullblade (that is, a fullblade sized for two-handed use by a Huge creature) would be a Large creature. A Medium creature with the powerful build racial trait, such as a goliath or half-giant, with the Exotic Weapon Proficiency (fullblade) feat could also wield a Huge fullblade.

As to the second issue, regardless of the wielder's or the weapon's size, a fullblade is not a reach weapon. Even a Medium creature with powerful build who wields a Huge fullblade would be able to use it only against creatures at a distance of his natural reach (typically 5 feet), but no more than that.

Does the powerful build racial trait change the damage the character deals with unarmed strikes and natural weapons?

No. The powerful build racial trait allows the character to "use weapons designed for a creature one size larger without penalty" but doesn't say anything about changing the damage dealt by his unarmed strikes or natural weapons.

The *Player's Handbook* says that to determine cover I must draw a line between my square and my target's square. What if my target or I take up more than one square?

Whenever a rule requires you to choose "a corner of your square," you may choose any corner of any square you occupy (even one that isn't on the border of your space). The same is true when picking a corner of an opponent's square, although a creature can't provide cover to itself. (That is, just because you can draw a line from a corner of your square to a corner of a target's square that's in the middle of its space doesn't give that creature cover against your ranged attack.)

How do reach weapons work if they are of a different size than the creature wielding them? Say, an ogre wielding a Small or Medium glaive, or a human with the Monkey Grip feat wielding a Large ranseur? What is the reach for each situation?

A reach weapon doubles its wielder's natural reach, but only if the weapon is at least of an appropriate size for the wielder. Wielding a "too-small" reach weapon grants no reach.

An ogre (Large) wielding a Medium or smaller reach weapon would gain no reach from the weapon, and would thus be able to attack foes either 5 feet or 10 feet distant (as normal for a Large creature wielding a non-reach weapon).

A human (Medium) wielding a Large or larger reach weapon would be able to attack a creature 10 feet away (but no further), and would not be able to use the weapon to attack a creature 5 feet away (as normal for a Medium creature wielding a reach weapon). A human wielding a Small reach weapon would gain no reach from the weapon.

The *Player's Handbook* isn't as clear on this as it could be, although an example of reach in action on page 113 in the *Player's Handbook* provides pretty strong support: "A typical Large character wielding a reach weapon *of the appropriate size* can attack a creature 15 or 20 feet away..." [italics added]. While this reference doesn't mention the ability to wield a reach weapon larger than the appropriate size, allowing such a weapon to grant reach to its wielder is a reasonable extension of the spirit and intent of the rule.

The description of the spiked chain states that it is a reach weapon that can be used against adjacent foes. What if a Large creature wields a Large spiked chain? Can it attack the squares that are 10 feet away? What are the adjacent foes of a Large or larger creature?

As with the vast majority of examples in the *Player's Handbook,* the spiked chain description assumes that the wielder is a Small or Medium creature wielding a spiked chain appropriate to his size. What the description really means is that a character wielding a spiked chain can attack creatures that are within his natural reach (in addition to those at the normal range of a reach weapon). For a Medium or Small creature, that means creatures that are 5 feet away (i.e., "adjacent").

A Large creature wielding a spiked chain (or similar reach weapon that also allowed attacks against adjacent creatures) could attack creatures within his natural reach (that is, who are either 5 or 10 feet away), in addition to those at the normal range of a Large reach weapon (15 or 20 feet away).

A Huge creature wielding a spiked chain could attack creatures 5 to 30 feet away. A Gargantuan creature wielding a spiked chain could attack creatures 5 to 40 feet away, and a Colossal creature wielding a spiked chain could attack creatures anywhere from 5 to 60 feet away.

Is a character wielding a two-handed reach weapon (such as a longspear) and wearing spiked armor threatening all squares within 10 feet? Assuming he has Combat Reflexes, can he make an attack of opportunity with his longspear and then with his armor spikes in the same round?

A character wearing spiked armor threatens all squares within his normal reach (5 feet away). If he also wields a longspear, he would also threaten all squares 10 feet away.

Any time a character wielding more than one weapon is allowed an attack of opportunity, he may use any weapon that threatens the opponent who has provoked the attack. In this case, imagine an enemy who charged the character and then tried to disarm him. The charge attack would provoke an attack of opportunity from the longspear as the enemy moved out of a threatened square (in order to move adjacent to the character and deliver the charge attack). Then, the disarm attempt would provoke another attack of opportunity (assuming the enemy didn't have Improved Disarm). This attack of opportunity could only be made with the armor spikes, since the longspear doesn't threaten an adjacent enemy.

If an enemy makes an attack against me that would provoke an attack of opportunity (such as a disarm or grapple attempt), do I get the attack of opportunity if I can't reach him? Would the Close-Quarters Fighting feat help at all?

Strictly speaking, if you don't threaten an enemy, you can't make attacks of opportunity against that enemy. Thus, if an ogre tried to sunder your elf's longsword from 10 feet away, you wouldn't get an attack of opportunity against the ogre (since an

elf wielding a longsword doesn't threaten an enemy 10 feet away). This is true even if the ogre is reaching out with his hand, such as when trying to grapple you.

Even the Close-Quarters Fighting feat doesn't help, since that feat only applies when the attack of opportunity against a grappling foe would normally be denied by "a feat or special ability that would normally bypass the attack" and lists Improved Grapple and improved grab as examples.

If, as DM, this bothers your sensibilities and you and your players are willing to bend the letter of the rules a bit, consider the following house rule that the Sage has used in his games in the past: If a foe would provoke an attack of opportunity with any action that brings him (or something he holds) into contact with you or your space, you may make an attack of opportunity against the foe (or the object he holds, if that's what's contacting you). This means that an ogre trying to initiate a grapple would provoke an attack of opportunity which you could make against the ogre (since his hand and arm are clearly coming within your reach in order to grab you), while the same ogre trying to sunder your weapon with his greatclub would provoke an attack of opportunity that you could only make against the greatclub (that is, with a disarm or sunder attempt).

Which square is a rider in when on horseback? What if two people are on the horse? What about a larger mount?

A mounted character is considered to be sharing his mount's entire space. Effectively, he is in all squares simultaneously. This is true regardless of how many creatures are riding the mount or the relative difference between the rider's space and the mount's space. Remember that a creature in combat is considered to be in continuous motion within its space, shifting back and forth as the battle rages around it. This is just as true for a mount, which means that its rider is also being shifted around within the mount's space.

Can a wizard carry her familiar, or must they be at least three size categories apart in order to share the same space? How do I determine if the familiar is affected by an attack against the master?

The rule against two creatures sharing the same space doesn't apply in any situation where one creature is carrying the other, whether that's a horse carrying a knight, a riding dog carrying a halfling, or an elf wizard carrying her raven familiar. As clarified by the previous answer, a familiar carried by its master would be treated as sharing the master's space. However, the familiar would be in no danger of being accidentally struck by a melee or ranged attack made against the master. If the familiar were visible to an attacker, the attacker could choose to target it with an attack as if it were a carried object (see the sunder rules on page 158 in the *Player's Handbook*); the familiar should be allowed to use either its own Dexterity modifier or its master's, whichever is better.

Of course, as long as the familiar is Tiny or smaller, a wizard doesn't have to carry her familiar at all. Tiny and smaller creatures can enter or share the space occupied by a Small or larger creature (they must do so in order to attack, after all). This is a specific exception to the normal restriction against two creatures sharing the same space.

(Technically, a Tiny or smaller creature can also occupy a square occupied by another Tiny or smaller creature, but in such a case they aren't really occupying the same space—they're occupying fractions of the overall square. If you have a lot of Tiny vs. Tiny combats in your game, consider subdividing any square occupied by such creatures into four quarter-squares to help visualize this.)

Dragon

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by Greg Marks

CHANGE OF ENVIRONS

BARBARIAN

The medieval Arabic cultures of the Middle East considered the crusaders barbarians. The Romans said the same of the Visigoths who settled Spain and ruled with a monarchy for four centuries. Being a barbarian often proves a matter of perception, and many different possibilities exist. The background you give your barbarian, along with an associated feat, can help you offer up a few surprises the next time someone scoffs at you playing yet another "dumb" barbarian. Treat these feats as regional feats. You may take one at 1st level, and you may only have one throughout your career.

Arctic: Many barbarians are modeled after the Vikings of Scandinavia, but what of barbarian tribes of the far north? For centuries, Inuit tribes subsisted on fish they caught from the sea and what caribou and seals they could hunt. Barbarians of the far north must deal not only with extreme temperatures and lack of food, but also with unusual seasons, where a day can last seemingly forever. Growing up in an arctic environment gives your barbarian access to the Darkness Adaptation feat.

Plains: Horse-loving tribes, such as the Sioux of the Great Plains and the Mongols of Asia, traveled the wide-open plains hunting both small game and roaming herd animals. Barbarians from these regions value personal freedom almost as much as they value their families and their mounts. Such barbarians become talented hunters to feed those who depend on their skills. Being raised on the plains gives your barbarian access to the Efficient Hunter feat.

Underground: Not only dwarves live underground. Underground barbarians might mine valuable ores, forage for wild fungus, or hunt cave lizards for food. Grimlocks provide a good example of this kind of society (see the "Ecology of the Grimlock" in *Dragon* #327). Such tribes must contest with a host of vicious creatures found in the Underdark. An underground-dwelling barbarian can take the Fury of Stone feat.

DARKNESS ADAPTATION [GENERAL]

Living in a land that experiences prolonged periods of darkness, you possess superior sight.

Prerequisite: Raised in an arctic environment.

Benefit: You see twice as far as normal in areas of poor illumination. If you possess low-light vision, you see three times the normal distance. This feat does not affect darkvision.

EFFICIENT HUNTER [GENERAL]

You are skilled at finding food where others fail.

Prerequisites: Survival 1 rank, raised in a plains environment.

Benefit: You receive a +2 bonus on Survival checks. When making checks to get along in the wild, successful checks provide enough food for yourself and a number of additional people equal to your Wisdom modifier (minimum of +1) without raising the DC of the check.

Normal: When making checks to get along in the wild, you can support one other person for every 2 points by which your check result exceeds 10.

FURY OF STONE [GENERAL]

While underground, you are able to draw on the strength of the surrounding stone and extend the length of your rage.

Prerequisites: Ability to rage or frenzy, raised in an underground environment.

Benefit: While underground, your rage lasts for twice as long as it normally would. However, when above ground the duration of your rage is halved.

Normal: A barbarian's rage normally lasts for a number of rounds equal to 3 + the character's (newly improved) Constitution modifier.

by Troy E. Taylor

TEMPLE-SERVING BARDS

BARD

An adventuring bard unsatisfied with his lot as a wanderer sometimes finds his calling while serving his chosen deity in one of several specialized roles. Religion often provides access to resources and places of sanctuary as well as the opportunity for drifting souls to rise in social status. Such opportunities make serving the temple an attractive alternative to usual choices, such as serving a wealthy patron or attending a bardic college.

BUGLE, FIFE, AND DRUM CORPS

Faiths with martial aspects, such as for Corellon Larethian, Erythnul, Heironeous, Hextor, and St. Cuthbert, require musicians to keep troops in good marching order. In addition, such music can sound battlefield orders.

CANTOR

Temples of Corellon Larethian, Moradin, and Pelor rely on vocalists to lead choirs in hymns or monks in chants that make up parts of daily rituals. Cantors use their inspire competence bardic music ability to help the faithful with important tasks or to aid themselves in composing new works.

DIPLOMAT

Nearly every faith employs smooth talkers, especially bards capable of fascinating others. Yondalla's and Moradin's temples dispatch envoys to parley with human leaders while St. Cuthbert's emissaries help avert unnecessary conflicts. For evil-aligned temples, diplomat is just another word for spy, with each skilled in Disguise, Escape Artist, Forgery, and Sleight of Hand.

DRAMATIST

Dramatists travel from village to village, performing morality plays and spreading the word of their deities. Heironeous's high clerics, for example, arrange for performances on festival and high-feast days. The temple of Kord hires actors to add to the spectacle of athletic exhibitions.

INTERPRETIVE DANCERS

Yondalla's dancers convey the mystery of fertility rites with their passionate freestyle forms, Pelor's represent the sun's daily journey in a graceful ballet, while Ehlonna's dancers evoke nature spirits with untamed gyrations around a bonfire.

LIBRARIAN

The bardic knack for recalling ancient lore, obscure stories, and esoteric trivia makes them well suited to cataloging the vast collections common to temples of Boccob, Vecna, and Wee Jas. Because high-level clerics and wizards can rarely escape from their research, librarians go out into the world to acquire rare volumes and artifacts.

ORGANIST

It takes a lot of dedication to play the organ, not to mention agility. Now that many of Garl Glittergold's temples boast organs other faiths have begun hiring gnome craftsmen to construct and maintain organs within their sanctuaries.

DIVINE INSPIRATION

Your piety grants you the ability to aid your friends to a level beyond your natural skills.

Prerequisites: Bardic music ability, ability to turn undead.

Benefit: Your bard and cleric levels stack for the purpose of determining your bardic music ability. For example, a human 5th-level bard/1st-level cleric with 9 ranks in a Perform skill could use the *suggestion* bardic music ability.

In addition, Perform is always a class skill for you.

by Joshua Cole

THE RAGE CLERIC

The deities of the core D&D pantheon span the spectrum of both alignment and temperament. Their clerics display equal variety when it comes to domain spells, customs, and codes of conduct.

Why should a cleric of a wild warrior deity like Gruumsh or Kord equip himself in heavy armor, or even learn its use, when his barbaric flock enters battle with only fury and courage for protection?

FAITHFUL FRENZY

The archetypical D&D cleric, with his mace and full plate displayed as prominently as his holy symbol, is as much a warrior as a spellcaster. In a similar vein, the rage cleric presents his divinely-inspired fighting arts just as proudly, although they take a very different form.

A rage cleric has the barbarian's rage ability. Although this greatly increases his melee prowess, it also limits his spell-casting ability in the heat of combat. The rage cleric's lower base attack bonus and d8 Hit Dice make him a far less effective front-line fighter than a barbarian, but if he prepares himself with spells beforehand he becomes a formidable berserker.

Most rage clerics follow deities who grant access to the Chaos, Strength, and War domains. On rare occasions, neutral clerics of lawful war deities adopt this class, but such wild warrior-priests walk a fine line between losing their deities' favor and capitalizing on their signature ability.

Rage clerics often begin their careers as barbarians, but at some point they experience a spiritual awakening that leads them down the path of the faithful.

Humans, dwarves, and half-orcs make up the majority of rage clerics. Elves, although chaotically inclined, usually lack the inner ferocity necessary to turn that chaos into a barbaric rage. Orc clerics, on the other hand, almost always adopt this variant class, which personifies the will of their barbaric deities. Many savage humanoids and lesser giants also favor it.

GAME RULE INFORMATION

The rage cleric is a variant cleric. Unless otherwise noted, a rage cleric advances in the same manner as a cleric (same Hit Die, base attack bonus, saving throw bonuses, skill points, and so on). When a character elects to take a level of cleric or rage cleric, he may not later take levels in the other class. This prevents the character from gaining the benefits of a 1st-level cleric twice.

Alignment: A rage cleric cannot be lawful but must still be within one step of his deity's alignment.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: A rage cleric is proficient with all simple weapons, light armor, and shields (except tower shields).

Rage: A rage cleric rages as a barbarian of equal level and gains the greater rage, indomitable will, tireless rage, and mighty rage class features as he progresses. Rage cleric and barbarian levels stack for the purposes of determining the number of times per day a character can enter a rage and the type of rage variant available.

In exchange, a rage cleric loses his ability to turn or rebuke undead as well as his ability to gain domains (which includes domain granted powers and domain spells).

EX-RAGE CLERICS

A rage cleric who becomes lawful loses his rage abilities. However, provided that his deity accepts lawful-aligned clerics, he can continue to advance in this class and gain spells.

A rage cleric who grossly violates the code of conduct required by his deity (generally by acting in a manner contrary to the deity's alignment or purposes) loses all spells and class features, except for rage and proficiency with light armor and simple weapons. He cannot continue to advance in this class until he atones (see the *atonement* spell on page 201 of the *Player's Handbook*).

CLERIC

by William L. Christensen

THE MOUNTED DRUID

DRUID

Rarely do druids act as mounted combatants, despite being well suited for such a role. Druids have proficiency with several remarkably effective mounted combat weapons, and a druid's animal companion can make a powerful steed.

Weapons and Equipment: Of the weapons on the druid's proficiency list, the spear and shortspear prove the most effective in mounted combat. Both work equally well as melee or ranged weapons, allowing greater versatility in combat. The club, while limited to a mere 10-foot range increment (half that of the aforementioned weapons), can also serve as both a melee and a ranged weapon. The spear deals more damage than any other weapon druids are proficient with, but it requires the use of two hands to wield. If the druid finds herself dismounted, remember that the spear deals double damage if set against charging opponents. For equipment, barding (especially magic barding) should be the druid's top priority to protect and augment her favored animal allies. Also, she should not eschew the slightly more expensive military saddle.

Animal Companions: A druid's animal companion helps to define her as a character. Although it need not be her mount, a rideable companion can prove invaluable to the druid specializing in mounted combat. Many of the animals on the standard druid's animal companion list—from the horse to the riding dog—can serve as mounts. An elk (as presented in the Elk sidebar), a young moose (from DRAGON #327), or a caribou (from *Frostburn*) can make an excellent mount.

If using her animal companion for a mount, a druid must make sure to train it for combat riding (see the Handle Animal skill on page 74 of the *Player's Handbook*). A rider on a mount that lacks said training must dismount before entering combat or succeed at a DC 20 Ride check each round as a move action to keep her mount under control.

Spells: Certain spells (and the magic items that emulate them) can prove invaluable to the druid and her animal companion mount. Of course, any ability or Armor Class boosting spell is worth casting on a mount, as are *animal growth, foresight, pass without trace, spider climb,* and *true seeing.*

ELK

If you seek something a little more exotic, talk to your DM about acquiring an elk animal companion.

Elk **CR 2**
N Large animal
Init +1
Senses low-light vision, scent; Listen +4, Spot +4
AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 13
hp 22 (3 HD)
Fort +6, **Ref** +4, **Will** +1
Spd 40 ft. (8 squares)
Atk gore +5 (1d8+2) and 2 hooves +0 (1d6+2)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.
Base Atk +2; **Grp** +8
Abilities Str 16, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 6
Feats Endurance, Run
Skills Hide +0, Jump +4, Listen +4, Move Silently +4, Spot +4

Carrying Capacity: A light load for an elk is up to 228 pounds; a medium load, 229–459 pounds; and a heavy load, 500–690 pounds. An elk can drag 3,450 pounds.

Skills: Elk have a +4 racial bonus on Listen and Spot checks.

This creature appears to be an enormous brown-red deer with a massive rack of antlers and wide, rounded hooves.

In this case, "elk" refers to *Cervus elaphus,* the animal North Americans call elk and Europeans refer to as red deer. For an example of a different kind of animal that might use these stats see the red elk Yakul in the movie *Princess Mononoke.*

by Hal Maclean

CULTURED COMBATANTS I

FIGHTER

It lives in all of us. The urge to perform. The hunger for applause. To blaze like a star on stage. Mastering a Perform skill demands years of patience and dedication. Those who make this commitment sometimes discover ways to apply their hard-earned talents to the battlefield, as demonstrated by the following feats. The challenge for fighters, of course, is acquiring enough ranks in Perform to qualify for these combat options (in the form of feats).

This is the first of a two-part series of feats based on specific Perform skill uses. Look for the second part in DRAGON #335.

BREATH CONTROL [GENERAL]

You enjoy an almost legendary ability to master the air in your lungs.

Prerequisite: Perform (wind instrument) 5 ranks.

Benefit: You get a +2 bonus on all Perform (wind instruments) checks and saves made against inhaled poisons and nauseating vapors. In addition, you may hold your breath for a number of rounds equal to the result of a Perform (wind instruments) check or twice your Constitution score (whichever is higher).

Special: A fighter may select Breath Control as one of his fighter bonus feats (see page 38 of the *Player's Handbook*).

DEADLY CONCUSSION [GENERAL]

Your shattering rhythms pass through armor to rattle your opponent's bones.

Prerequisites: Str 13, Perform (percussion) 6 ranks, Improved Sunder, Power Attack.

Benefit: Whenever you use a bludgeoning weapon to make a sunder special attack against an opponent's armor or shield and you destroy the item with a single hit, you deal an amount of damage to your opponent equal to the amount of damage you dealt to destroy his armor or shield.

Special: A fighter may select Deadly Concussion as one of his fighter bonus feats.

ELUSIVE DANCE [GENERAL]

Your training in dance allows you to mirror and anticipate an opponent's moves.

Prerequisites: Perform (dance) 5 ranks.

Benefit: During your action, you designate an opponent. That opponent cannot make attacks of opportunity against you. You can select a new opponent on any action. If you have the Dodge feat you must designate the same opponent as the target for both feats.

Special: A fighter may select Elusive Dance as one of his fighter bonus feats.

MASTER OF MOCKERY [GENERAL]

A genius of repartee and quick-witted insults, you can provoke your opponents to leave them too furious to worry about their own safety.

Prerequisite: Perform (comedy) 8 ranks.

Benefit: You may, as a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity, attempt to enrage a single melee opponent by making a Perform (comedy) check. The result of this check represents the DC of the Will save your opponent must make to avoid becoming enraged. Enraged opponents attack you whenever able, ignoring all other targets. They gain a +2 morale bonus on attack rolls against you but take a –2 penalty to Armor Class. This is a mind-affecting, language-dependent effect.

Special: A fighter may select Master of Mockery as one of his fighter bonus feats.

by Tracy Taylor; feat by Richard Farrese

MONKS IN THE CITY

After receiving an invitation to a ball, most players spend minutes, hours, and sometimes entire sessions arguing with the DM in a vain attempting to justify armament (usually magic ones), spell components, wands, and staves as appropriate attire. In the end, however, the result tends to be the same: Disheartened, the party reluctantly trudges up to the castle garbed in the latest finery of the ruling class only to have their carefully concealed weapons detected and subsequently removed by the Royal Guard.

The bard, however, instead of dreading the ball actually finds himself in his element: hobnobbing with the social elite, uncovering information, and infiltrating even the most secretive of cliques. His weakness—martial prowess—does not cause him great concern in this setting. Confidently, he seeks out another like himself, an adventurer who does not rely on the trappings of war or the aromatic spell components of the arcane or divine spellcasters. In short, he finds a monk, and forges one of the most powerful duos for urban adventure.

SOCIAL CIRCLES

A bard generally lacks the martial ability to defend himself, much less bring down the enemy should the need arise. The monk, therefore, makes a valuable companion. Mingling with the crowd like her alluring compatriot, the monk appears as just another partygoer. She does not need armor, weapons, spell components or staves, and is equally effective with her hands full or empty. She draws on her wide array of class abilities to defend herself and her bardic companion as well as attack with lethal accuracy from within the enemy's midst. A monk's combat abilities add to her Armor Class and allow her to deal damage comparable to most weapons with only her fists.

From the crystal chandeliers and gold-inlaid ballrooms of the rich and famous to the ale-drenched, blood-stained floors of the seedy dock taverns, a bard and monk team maneuvers where others flounder, blends in where other party members stand out, and soundly defeats enemies without relying overmuch on martial trappings.

WISDOM AND CHARISMA

While the monk certainly takes center stage when the bard's mouth leads the team into dangerous situations, she can also contribute to more social encounters. The monk, by her lawful nature, exudes Wisdom and restraint, earning instant (if often begrudging) respect from nobility and common folk alike. Several of the monk's class skills lend themselves to nonviolent urban situations. Chief among these interpersonal skills are Diplomacy and Sense Motive, although the monk might on occasion find reasons to use Concentration, Listen, and Spot as well. The monk's innate Wisdom, when combined with the bard's bardic knowledge ability, might allow the team to infer connections and put important clues in place to solve mysteries.

Next time your DM sets the stage for an adventure of urban intrigue and deception, you need not groan and argue over NPCs stripping your entire party of its precious arms. Instead, consider foregoing the typical fighter, rogue, or spellcaster combinations and turn to the highly effective pairing of bard and monk. While not necessarily the most effective classes in a typical dungeon crawl, they more than hold their own in the city.

HIGH SOCIETY [GENERAL]

You know good manners and were trained to handle social interactions in noble circles.

Prerequisites: Diplomacy 4 ranks.

Benefit: You get a +3 bonus on Bluff, Diplomacy, or Disguise checks made when interacting with members of the highest levels of society, such as monarchs, nobles, courtiers, lords and ladies, and high-ranking clerics.

by Brian Cortijo

PREFERRED PRAYERS

PALADIN

Paladins receive a variety of spells as they advance. Most of those spells help to protect a paladin or her party and negate the dangers they face. Some spells work best for the paladin when she prepares them every day, while others serve better when reserved only for necessary moments.

1ST LEVEL

Low-level paladins likely lack access to good-aligned weapons, making *bless weapon* an extremely useful spell to prepare. Paladins who later select the Improved Critical feat find this spell very handy.

Players often underestimate *cure light wounds* as a paladin spell, mainly because of the paladin's lay on hands ability. Paladins without very high Charisma scores find the extra healing potential a suitable replacement.

Every paladin should consider preparing *lesser restoration* and *protection from evil*. *Lesser restoration* helps the paladin or her comrades quickly recover from rather nasty attacks like poison, while *protection from evil* guards against charms, compulsions, and summoned creatures in addition to its useful bonuses to AC and saving throws.

2ND LEVEL

Until the paladin gains access to Charisma-enhancing magic items, *eagle's splendor* leaps out as perhaps the most useful of her 2nd-level spells. The bonus to Charisma improves not only her Charisma-based skill checks, but also her lay on hands ability and her divine grace bonus on saving throws. Once the paladin does gain a Charisma-enhancing item, she should consider *bull's strength* as a potential replacement for daily preparation.

Undetectable alignment and *zone of truth* serve as powerful utility spells for the paladin attempting stealth or serving as a judge in a legal case, but neither is necessary to prepare when setting out for adventure.

No paladin should start the day without a *delay poison* or *remove paralysis* spell unless another party member prepares these spells already as part of his daily selection. Paralysis regularly threatens paladins and their companions (from undead and other foes) and her immunity to disease does not extend to poisons she might encounter.

3RD LEVEL

The paladin has a lot of freedom in choosing spells of this level, but *cure moderate wounds* should be considered mandatory, as it increases the paladin's healing potential.

A paladin who regularly finds her mount on the brink of death might find *heal mount* useful, as long as she remembers that her mount returns fully healed each time she calls it.

Magic circle against evil and *magic circle against chaos* are very similar spells, and the paladin might consider preparing one or the other, especially if she already knows the opponents she will likely face on a given adventure.

4TH LEVEL

Death ward provides immunity to all death effects and negative energy attacks, making the paladin a dangerous foe to undead and evil spellcasters. The automatic dispelling properties of *dispel evil* and *dispel chaos*, coupled with bonuses to AC and the ability to drive an extraplanar creature back to its home plane, makes preparing one of these spells an excellent choice for the paladin.

A paladin frequently needs the increased enhancement bonus and damage against some targets that *holy sword* provides, but rarely enough that daily preparation of the spell should be carefully considered. In similar fashion, the *restoration* spell can be passed over on days the paladin spends recovering from past adventures.

A paladin who prepares *delay poison* on a regular basis should prepare *neutralize poison* only infrequently. *Delay poison* allows the paladin to attempt to neutralize the poison through a Heal check or to seek a cleric to cast the spell for her.

by Joshua Cole

RANGER LORE

RANGER

Many players see the ranger as the martial counterpart to the spellcasting druid. However, the ranger finds himself in national or private employ as often as in natural or mystical service. In the former cases he uses his skills as a scout and tracker, uncovering and identifying the many natural resources of the wilderness. Adventuring parties beyond the first few levels might scorn such mundane missions, but the survival know-how of a seasoned ranger sometimes means the difference between life and death for even the mightiest adventurers.

Whether his companions are desperate for some quick cash, seeking a rare resource to complete a quest, or simply in need of a way to avoid freezing to death, they praise the ranger's ability to analyze the bounty of the natural world.

NATURAL RESOURCEFULNESS

While in the wilderness, a ranger's Knowledge (nature) skill can provide more aid than traditionally vital skills like Diplomacy, Survival, and Tumbling.

In its most obvious application, identifying creatures of the animal or plant type can mean the difference between casting *lightning bolt* on a shambling mound (which enhances it) or using *cone of cold* to destroy it. Animals and animated plants pose a serious threat to an unprepared adventuring party, but a party ready to meet their challenges rarely fails.

A ranger also knows his way around terrain other characters consider alien or impassable. Knowledge (nature) won't identify the exact paths or passes in a tangled wilderness of craggy peaks and brooding forests, but it can tell a ranger what signs betray the presence of those paths and what dangers might await the party along them.

FINDING RESOURCES

A ranger can find useful objects, raw materials, and even potential allies by studying the lay of the land and making a Knowledge (nature) check. Unlike the Survival skill, this doesn't allow the ranger to gather goods such as medicinal herbs, antitoxins, or simple food (although it might tip him off to their existence). Rather, it provides him with a general overview of what resources might be available in the area. A character with 5 or more ranks in Survival gains a +2 synergy bonus on this check.

DC 10: You have a passing familiarity with the local flora and fauna and can identify obviously useful goods to harvest from them, such as valuable furs or a particularly prized wood.

DC 15: You know many pertinent details about the local environment, and can judge whether a valuable or useful resource is likely to be present within a few miles, even if it's not immediately apparent, such as medicinal herbs or exotic meat.

DC 20: You know the valuable resources inherent in an area, know the difference between the rumors and facts about those resources, and can identify them on sight. You can also surmise what mineral resources are likely present near the surface within the area.

DC 25: You immediately recognize the value inherent in any animal or plant you encounter, including esoteric or magical details such as the spell components a wizard could derive from them. In addition, you can conclusively identify surface mineral resources and guess at those deeper underground.

DC 30: Animal, vegetable, and mineral—you see it all and know it all. You know what mineral deposits likely lie beneath the surface of whatever geologic feature you study. You know the valuable properties of any native natural creature or plant and can guess if such species might live within an area just by surveying the surrounding area.

by Richard Farrese

UNSEEN SISTERS

Unfailingly, sovereigns, nobles, courtiers, and other important dignitaries depend on strong sword arms for protection. While most hired bodyguards are heavily armored fighters who rely on intimidation and skill in battle to protect their charges, some use more subtle tactics. Among the latter are members of the Unseen Sisterhood, whose skills of deception and surprise know no peer.

HISTORY

Although history has forgotten the names of the first women who dedicated their lives to protecting their social superiors, the techniques and subtleties they created still see use today. The Unseen Sisters, founded several centuries ago, refined these methods even as their organization evolved from a handful of dedicated but secretive bodyguards serving a queen and her daughters to an independent and ever-growing guild operating on a worldwide stage.

GOALS AND ACTIVITIES

The Unseen Sisters dedicate themselves to protecting noble ladies and other women holding power or prestige. The sisterhood trains its members in a variety of fields, from personal combat tactics to good manners. The most important skills taught by the Unseen Sisters, however, relate to deceitfulness. Members of the sisterhood act as servants, chambermaids, teachers, chaperones, babysitters, nannies, and simple companions to the noblewomen they protect. As such, most people fail to realize they are lethal combatants able to defend those in their care.

MEMBERSHIP

The Unseen Sisterhood hand picks its members from among the most skillful female rogues of the world who also exhibit some degree of expertise in Diplomacy and Disguise. On occasion, the sisterhood accepts a warrior or spellcaster, but such members are rare. Because of the cause it serves the sisterhood mostly chooses lawful and good members, using magical tests to weed out evil and chaotic candidates.

HIERARCHY AND PROMINENT MEMBERS

Several branches of the Unseen Sisterhood exist. While every branch officially reports to Zahrna Silkshield, the Head Mistress of the sisterhood, a strongly independent mistress leads each faction, often cultivating her own agenda. Because of conflicting interests, beliefs, or morals, some mistresses refuse to provide protection to certain patrons. The different agendas of branch leaders rarely cause problems, but on occasion their ambitions blur the true purpose of the sisterhood. When this happens the head mistress summons her inferiors to an internal court where disputes and betrayals are swiftly quelled. Thus has the Unseen Sisterhood existed for hundreds of years.

Each non-mistress member bears the title of Unseen Sister. Although no official ranking exists, sisters with more experience or competence generally protect more important noblewomen than those less skilled.

DECEITFUL APPEARANCES [GENERAL]

You can fool others into thinking you are defenseless.

Prerequisites: Sleight of Hand 5 ranks, base attack bonus +3.

Benefit: When bearing only light weapons that you have made Sleight of Hand checks to hide on your body, you automatically adopt mannerisms and postures that make you appear defenseless. This deception grants you a +2 circumstance bonus on initiative checks and attack rolls made with a hidden weapon during the first round of combat. These bonuses do not apply if your enemies spot your weapons prior to combat.

ROGUE

by Joshua Cole

KNOWSTONES

In the most distant prehistory, ancient sorcerers crafted the first mortal magic items, some of which rivaled divinely forged artifacts in raw, untamed power. While most of those ancient items tore themselves apart by the sheer force of their barely bound eldritch might, a few lesser items survived. Recently, some modern sorcerers have allegedly uncovered the techniques for fashioning knowstones.

Note: DMs should note that knowstones are an optional rule and should be fully versed and comfortable with this concept before allowing knowstones.

KNOWSTONES

A knowstone is a semi-precious stone containing the formula for casting a spell within.

Physical Description: A typical knowstone is a small, smooth semi-precious stone inscribed with an ancient arcane symbol. The stone itself typically has a value no greater than 25 gp before the etching of the arcane symbol.

Activation: A knowstone provides its bearer with knowledge of the inscribed spell, which he can then use his spell slots to cast normally (as if the inscribed spell were among his known spells). The knowstone's bearer need not make any conscious decision to use the knowstone apart from deciding to cast the inscribed spell. (This is considered part of the spellcasting action.) Any spontaneous caster can use a knowstone, provided that the spell it includes is on his spell list and he can cast spells of its level. For example, a bard may cast *crushing despair* from a *knowstone of crushing despair* if he can cast 3rd-level spells, whereas a sorcerer must be able to cast 4th-level spells to employ a knowstone of that spell.

A knowstone always appears in a piece of jewelry but does not occupy a magic item slot. It takes 24 hours for a knowstone to attune to a new bearer, after which time the knowstone grants its inscribed spell.

Creation: You can create a knowstone for any spell you know. Crafting a knowstone takes one day for each 1,000 gp in its base price (500 gp total price for a 0-level spell). The base price of a knowstone is its the spell level squared × 1,000 gp + expensive material components or focus (if any). To craft a knowstone, you must spend 1/25 of this base price in XP and use up raw materials costing one-half of this base price. Creating a knowstone requires the Craft Wondrous Item feat.

SAMPLE KNOWSTONES

0—*Knowstone of disrupt undead*
Faint necromancy; CL 3rd; Craft Wondrous Item, *disrupt undead;* Price 500 gp; Weight —.

1st—*Knowstone of identify*
Faint divination; CL 3rd; Craft Wondrous Item, *identify;* Price 1,100 gp; Weight —.

2nd—*Knowstone of Melf's acid arrow*
Faint conjuration; CL 4th; Craft Wondrous Item, *Melf's acid arrow;* Price 4,000 gp; Weight —.

3rd—*Knowstone of lightning bolt*
Moderate evocation; CL 6th; Craft Wondrous Item, *lightning bolt;* Price 9,000 gp; Weight —.

4th—*Knowstone of stoneskin*
Moderate abjuration; CL 8th; Craft Wondrous Item, *stoneskin;* Price 16,250 gp; Weight —.

5th—*Knowstone of feeblemind*
Moderate enchantment; CL 10th; Craft Wondrous Item, *feeblemind;* Price 25,000 gp; Weight —.

6th—*Knowstone of programmed image*
Strong illusion; CL 12th; Craft Wondrous Item, *programmed image;* Price 36,025 gp; Weight —.

7th—*Knowstone of reverse gravity*
Strong transmutation; CL 14th; Craft Wondrous Item, *reverse gravity;* Price 49,000 gp; Weight —.

8th—*Knowstone of clone*
Strong necromancy; CL 16th; Craft Wondrous Item, *clone;* Price 65,500 gp; Weight —.

9th—*Knowstone of Mordenkainen's disjunction*
Strong abjuration; CL 18th; Craft Wondrous Item, *Mordenkainen's disjunction;* Price 81,000 gp; Weight —.

by Richard Pocklington

FLAWS FOR WIZARDS

WIZARD

Wizards, in general, are a curious lot. Many of them choose to withdraw from the world of the flesh, living in a more cerebral realm seldom visited by normal men. For many it is unclear why they would ever choose to go so far down such a path. Some wizards become entranced by their musty tomes and submerge themselves so deeply in ancient and mysterious arcana that they become engrossed in the world of magic. They wander the land dazed, sickened, and weary from their long hours of study. Some say that such is the price of the awesome magical might wielded by those few who call themselves wizards.

Flaws penalize a character in a specific way. Most of these flaws have obvious role-playing consequences, but they also have game mechanics penalties. The concept of flaws first appeared in *Unearthed Arcana*, but you don't need that book to use the flaws presented here. A character may only take up to two flaws, and they must be selected at 1st level. For each flaw you take, your character may select an additional feat. Thus, a 1st-level human character with two flaws may take four feats.

Although designed specifically with wizards in mind, other characters may select from these flaws if they meet the appropriate prerequisites.

ARCANE FATIGUE [FLAW]

Conjuring magical energies is especially draining for you.

Prerequisite: Ability to cast arcane spells.

Effect: Whenever you successfully cast an arcane spell you must immediately make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + spell level). If you fail you become fatigued. If you are fatigued as a result of this flaw, it has no further effect until that condition is removed.

ARCANE PARASITES [FLAW]

Thousands of unseen parasites within your flesh draw upon the arcane power held within every spell you cast.

Prerequisite: Ability to cast arcane spells.

Effect: Every arcane spell you cast has the DC to resist it lowered by 1. These parasites cannot be removed by any mortal means, even by a *miracle* or *wish*.

FORLORN [FLAW]

You lack the ability to summon a creature to do your bidding.

Prerequisite: Ability to call a familiar.

Effect: You lose the ability to call a familiar.

METHODICAL MAGICAL METHODS [FLAW]

Your spellcasting methods require a rigid posture that makes you vulnerable to your foes while casting.

Prerequisite: Ability to cast spells.

Effect: You are considered flat-footed with an effective Dexterity of 0 (–5 to AC) on any round in which you cast a spell. You may not cast spells defensively.

SHORT OF BREATH [FLAW]

You have limited stamina and you easily become exhausted by physical tasks.

Prerequisite: Constitution 13 or lower.

Effect: Whenever you make a Strength check, a Constitution check to continue running, or use the skills Climb, Jump, or Swim, you must make a Fortitude save at the same DC as the skill or ability check. If you fail this save, you become fatigued.

Normal: Doing something else that would normally cause fatigue exhausts an already fatigued character. An exhausted character suffers no further penalty by doing something else that would normally cause fatigue.

TEST SUBJECT

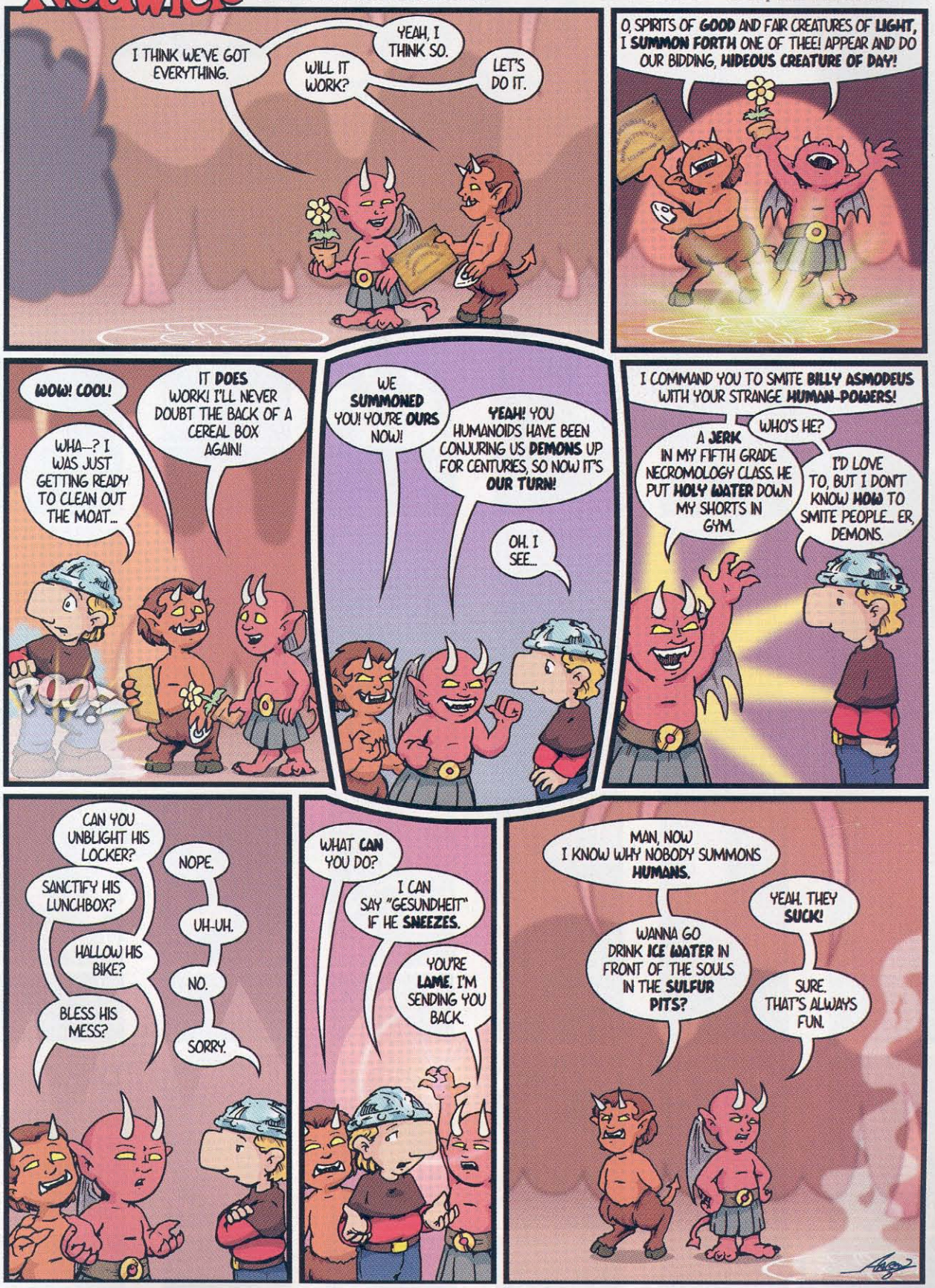
You had an unscrupulous master who used you to hone his magical talents.

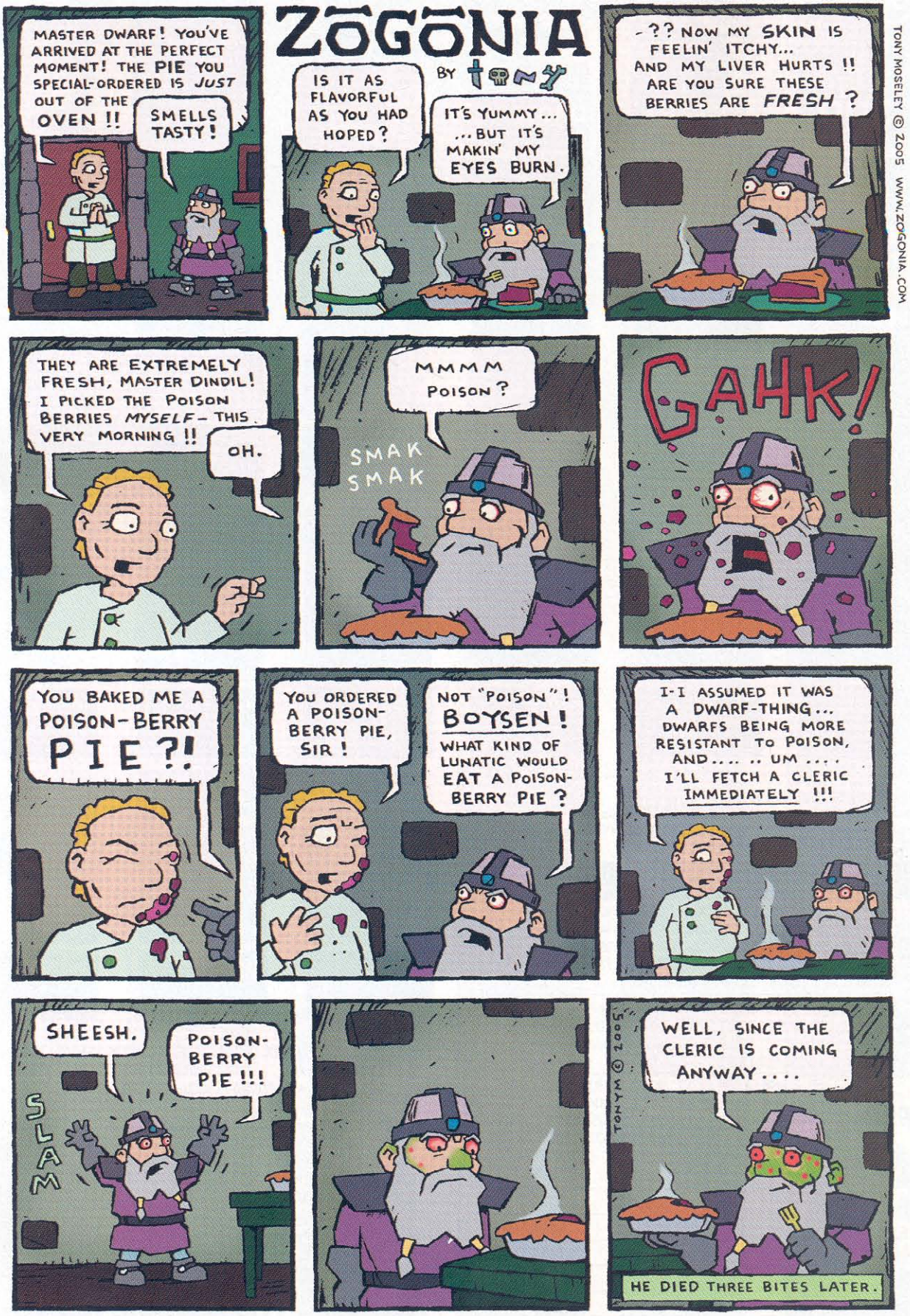
Effect: Choose three of the following schools: conjuration, enchantment, evocation, illusion, necromancy, and transmutation. Your saving throws made against spells and spell-like abilities from these schools suffer a –2 penalty.

Nodwick

by Aaron Williams
www.nodwick.com

"It's a summons." "What's a summons?" "It means summon's in trouble." - Rocky and Bullwinkle


I THINK WE'VE GOT EVERYTHING.
YEAH, I THINK SO.
WILL IT WORK?
LET'S DO IT.
O, SPIRITS OF GOOD AND FAIR CREATURES OF LIGHT, I SUMMON FORTH ONE OF THEE! APPEAR AND DO OUR BIDDING, HIDEOUS CREATURE OF DAY!
WOW! COOL!
IT DOES WORK! I'LL NEVER DOUBT THE BACK OF A CEREAL BOX AGAIN!
WHA--? I WAS JUST GETTING READY TO CLEAN OUT THE MOAT...
POOF
WE SUMMONED YOU! YOU'RE OURS NOW!
YEAH! YOU HUMANOIDS HAVE BEEN CONJURING US DEMONS UP FOR CENTURIES, SO NOW IT'S OUR TURN!
OH. I SEE...
I COMMAND YOU TO SMITE BILLY ASMODEUS WITH YOUR STRANGE HUMAN-POWERS!
WHO'S HE?
A JERK IN MY FIFTH GRADE NECROMOLOGY CLASS. HE PUT HOLY WATER DOWN MY SHORTS IN GYM.
I'D LOVE TO, BUT I DON'T KNOW HOW TO SMITE PEOPLE... ER, DEMONS.
CAN YOU UNBLIGHT HIS LOCKER?
SANCTIFY HIS LUNCHBOX?
HALLOW HIS BIKE?
BLESS HIS MESS?
NOPE.
UH-UH.
NO.
SORRY.
WHAT CAN YOU DO?
I CAN SAY "GESUNDHEIT" IF HE SNEEZES.
YOU'RE LAME. I'M SENDING YOU BACK.
MAN, NOW I KNOW WHY NOBODY SUMMONS HUMANS.
WANNA GO DRINK ICE WATER IN FRONT OF THE SOULS IN THE SULFUR PITS?
YEAH. THEY SUCK!
SURE. THAT'S ALWAYS FUN.


MASTER DWARF! YOU'VE ARRIVED AT THE PERFECT MOMENT! THE PIE YOU SPECIAL-ORDERED IS JUST OUT OF THE OVEN !!
SMELLS TASTY!
ZOGONIA
BY TONY
IS IT AS FLAVORFUL AS YOU HAD HOPED?
IT'S YUMMY... ...BUT IT'S MAKIN' MY EYES BURN.
-?? NOW MY SKIN IS FEELIN' ITCHY... AND MY LIVER HURTS !! ARE YOU SURE THESE BERRIES ARE FRESH ?
TONY MOSELEY © 2005 WWW.ZOGONIA.COM
THEY ARE EXTREMELY FRESH, MASTER DINDIL! I PICKED THE POISON BERRIES MYSELF - THIS VERY MORNING !!
OH.
MMMM POISON?
SMAK SMAK
GAHK!
YOU BAKED ME A POISON-BERRY PIE?!
YOU ORDERED A POISON-BERRY PIE, SIR!
NOT "POISON"! BOYSEN! WHAT KIND OF LUNATIC WOULD EAT A POISON-BERRY PIE?
I-I ASSUMED IT WAS A DWARF-THING... DWARFS BEING MORE RESISTANT TO POISON, AND..... UM .... I'LL FETCH A CLERIC IMMEDIATELY !!!
SHEESH.
POISON-BERRY PIE !!!
SLAM
TONYM © 2005
WELL, SINCE THE CLERIC IS COMING ANYWAY....
HE DIED THREE BITES LATER.